

Imagining Futures in Changing Locales: de-industrialisation and education/work interfaces

By

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**This thesis is submitted to the University of Wales in fulfilment of the
requirements of candidature for the degree of**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to
Daniel Patrick Bendle, Martin Royston Bendle, Patricia Dawn Marshall and
Clifford John Marshall, all of whom have left a positive mark on my life.

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This thesis would not have been possible without the help and support of number of people, and I have so many to thank for their guidance, assistance and support.

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Abstract

The study investigated men and women's engagement with education in two South Wales valley communities across three generations. It drew upon theoretical tools from social representations theory (Moscovici, 1984) to map dominant social representations circulating in two South Wales valley communities – Abertillery and Ynysawdre. Both communities had experienced a traumatic rupture in community life due to the closure of coal mining in their locales. This study understands social representations as belonging to communities, anchored in the strategies and practices that are particular to that locale and its specific history, and recognises that they influence action and interaction.

A snowball sampling method was used to recruit men and women of three generations - 16-25 years, 30-45 years and 50-70 years - who were given two research instruments. The first instrument was a semi-structured photo-elicitation interview. The photographs re-presented aspects of the visual and material culture of the locale. Questions related to the locale and to experiences of education and work. The second instrument was an unstructured interview that elicited experiences of education and work. A thematic analysis identified themes, or social representations, that related to the dominant social representations of education and work. Although individual accounts were elicited, differences in the appropriation of social representations and the meanings they held were found between locales, between generations and between genders. Data from both instruments allowed the structure of social representations within each locale to be mapped, which illustrated gender differences and change across generations. A narrative analysis of individual accounts demonstrated how social representations circulating in the locale became psychically active and acted as symbolic resources as individuals and groups made sense of the rupture in the community. Local communities constrain and facilitate what is available for constructing narrative accounts and social identities in relation to education and work, which shift across time.

Findings demonstrate that the accounts emphasized the ways in which key concepts were related. Particularly, how social representations and symbolic resources were connected to, and connected notions of community, identity and practice, along with institutions and relations of power. The dynamic interrelationship between social and personal change, between social representations and their appropriation as symbolic resources, was very evident in the narratives.

Specifically, findings demonstrate that education has only gradually become a resource for imagining the future, and that women were more able to cope than men with rupture, because their social identities were not as strongly anchored in the industrial practices of the locale.

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Prologue

Social representations belong to communities. They are anchored in the past and relate to the practises of communities, particularly forms of work that are available for men and women. They are not independent of each other, but have a complex structure that is related to the particular community in which they circulate. The ideas that make up the structure of a social representation are patterned; they are not arbitrary. Social representations do not only circulate within discourses of the community but are infused within the very materiality of place, such as the landscape, industrial architecture, buildings, and the artifacts in museums and workplaces that remain.



Pithead wheel at Abertillery Comprehensive School

As the opportunities afforded by material culture change, social representations related to past practices continue to circulate, remaining available to groups of people in the community. Social representations are structured in terms of a common sense logic that has meaning within the community and that serves a purpose for groups within the community. Social representations can take on new structure, as aspects realign to accommodate change in the locale, however, core meanings can persist.

Historical change within the industrial base in the South Wales valleys has resulted in dramatic changes in the practices and expectations of people living in these communities. The removal of the coal industry from the valleys has shaken the foundations of a traditional social structure causing a rupture in the life of these communities. High numbers of redundancies in male dominated employment has resulted in the removal of the practices that supported dominant ways of thinking, and has upset expectations of traditional social roles. In order to cope with this transition men and women have appropriated familiar, common sense ideas that have enabled them to move forward. This has enabled them to manage their social identities and imagine futures.

This thesis explores the structure of social representations in two locales – Abertillery and Ynysawdre. It investigates how social representations have influenced how three generations of men and women in these communities have imagined futures within education and work. The study has mapped aspects of the local culture using the theoretical tools of social representations theory in order to demonstrate how what was available to people within a single community became salient in different ways for different groups of community members.

Thomas and his wife Susan live with their adult daughter Danielle in Ynysawdre, across the road from his parents, Lewis and May. In the 1940s and 50s Lewis worked as a lorry mechanic, a lorry and bus driver and drove vehicles for the collieries. His wife May raised their children and maintained the home. Lewis left school at the earliest opportunity and has never since engaged with education, believing it to be irrelevant to his working life. May also did not engage with academic study, although in later life she has attended classes in flower arranging, and arts and crafts.

Thomas left school following compulsory education to become an apprentice welder manufacturing heavy goods vehicles. However, had little interest in the written work required of him and he avoided attending college. He subsequently worked as a car mechanic and as a furniture maker. Thomas has always worked productively with his hands, and he currently earns money by restoring and selling furniture. Like Thomas, his wife Susan did not engage with education and did not

continue her schooling. She left school knowing that she and Thomas would marry and they had planned to start a family soon after. Susan began work in a clothing factory and remained there until her maternal responsibilities led her to leave full-time work to take up part-time employment in a supermarket. She prefers working during the night so that she can be at home when her children are awake. Susan has never participated in formal education in any way, citing her employment and her role as a wife and mother as more important.

Their daughter Danielle fully engaged with schooling. She has since attended a college course and intends to gain further qualifications that will enable her to achieve a career as a nursery nurse. She has plans to live and work outside the locale, although will not move far and may return to the locale in the future.

In both the locales social representations formed binaries that could be related to the practises of heavy industry. These binaries can be seen through the accounts of the men and women throughout this study. Culture carries a reservoir of ideas that may be taken up and used, and social representations relating to the past continue to circulate as common sense theories. These vestiges of the past are being reproduced in the present and projected into the future by some groups, because these offer a way to make sense of being a man or woman in a specific locale.

Social representations of education have become increasingly available for younger generations. The ways in which community members of different generations appropriate social representations allows an understanding of why some groups disengage with education while others participate. This thesis focuses upon both the community and individual planes in order to gain an understanding of how people are using their locales to project futures for themselves within education and work.

Chapter 1

Making sense of education and work: contextualizing the use of social representations theory to investigate constructions of personal narratives

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Introduction

The prevailing view of industrialized economies is that knowledge, technology and innovation hold the key to their competitive advantage and to the enhancement of the welfare of their members (Brown and Lauder, 2003) and currently education is presented as the solution to many issues surrounding unemployment and regeneration. Major initiatives including 'National Targets for Lifelong Learning' and 'Adult Learners' Week', funded by the Department for Education and Skills support the view that to prosper in a competitive global economy, people need an education that equips them for work and prepares them to succeed in a wider economy and society (DfES, 2001). The work of the National Assembly for Wales 'Education and Lifelong Learning' committee reflects the high priority that further education and training has been given in Wales in recent years. In accordance with national governmental views, lifelong learning is promoted in Wales as the means to remain employable, with the Welsh Assembly Government progressing with its plan for a new lifelong learning centre - the first of its kind in Wales - to be constructed in post-industrial South Wales, an area of relatively low academic achievement and high unemployment. However, regardless of government policies, investment and assurances, at the beginning of the millennium the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (2000) were reporting static participation in all forms of lifelong learning.

In recent years industrial South Wales has experienced striking shifts in its economic structure, with the decline of dominant industries, particularly the collapse of heavy industries such as coal, steel and railways (Gorard, 1997) resulting in a rise in unemployment. Related to these shifts are changes in learning pathways, with a recent decrease in levels of participation in lifelong learning. Wales has suffered poorer school attendance figures than England (Selwyn and Gorard, 2002), and more people in Wales have been leaving school without qualifications than in the rest of the UK (Welsh Office, 1995b), and fewer Welsh students gain the necessary qualifications to allow access to higher education (Istance and Rees, G., 1994). A relatively high number of unqualified female school-leavers have been found in Wales (Istance and Rees, T., 1994), and in Wales fewer women than men undertake formal education or training as adults (National Assembly for Wales, 2004). The project aims to bring a social psychological understanding to the problem of relatively low participation in non-compulsory education in South Wales.

1.1.2 Context of Research

There has been a strong focus on the dramatic economic changes experienced by South Wales over a relatively short time period, and a huge amount of research has been undertaken with a view to contributing to the regeneration of this region. While this has been and remains a major responsibility of both national and local government, much of this work has been undertaken within educational and research institutes such as Cardiff University. A large number and variety of research projects have shown that large parts of South Wales have suffered not only the loss of major sources of employment, but also powerfully altered lifestyles and possible futures which directly result from the economic downturn (e.g. Fevre, 1989; Gorard and Rees, 2002). A major emphasis of both national and local government drives to tackle the regeneration of deprived areas has been that of lifelong learning, both as a social policy to combat exclusion and ease the re-entry of the unemployed into the labour market (DfEE, 1995; Welsh Funding Councils, 1998), and as a means to increase economic competitiveness and personal development (Coffield,

1999). Lifelong learning has been viewed as a way of promoting the professional and social development of employees and of acquiring new knowledge through the labour process (DfEE, 1998). In South Wales for example, while there has been a decline in the size of the workforce in the steel industry, there has been an effort to increase skill levels, with a focus on multi-skilling (Fairbrother, Stroud and Coffey, 2004). Lifelong learning is seen by policy makers as an important part of the process of regeneration.

This project seeks to understand how different social spaces play a role in the re-negotiation of social identities related to learning. This kind of socio-cultural approach highlights the power of cultural elements to affect people's career trajectories. The study focuses on two locales within industrial South Wales; Abertillery in Blaenau Gwent and Ynysawdre in the local authority area of Bridgend. Gorard and Rees (2002) define 'industrial' South Wales as an area running 80 miles east to west and 30 miles north to south. This area excludes Cardiff, the capital city with its beneficial economic links outside Wales, the seaside towns which benefit from tourism and sparsely populated farming areas that have not relied on heavy industry in the past. Industrial South Wales became relatively densely populated due to the availability of relatively well-paid work in the mining and steel working industries. However, with the decline of heavy industry, some locales have suffered extreme loss of employment along with related problems, while others have benefited from the arrival of manufacturing companies, which have brought employment and training opportunities. Llanhilleth in Blaenau Gwent and Bridgend are two of the locales studied by Gorard and Rees, as these locales represent specific patterns of economic change in South Wales.

Blaenau Gwent has been a victim of the decline in industry. Following the demise of the mining industry, Blaenau Gwent has become an employment black-spot, and currently suffers some of Wales's worst health and social problems. Bridgend, until recently represented an area that was benefiting from the investment made by overseas companies, but is currently suffering from major redundancies from both national and international companies. For this study, two specific areas, Abertillery, a town in Blaenau Gwent and Ynysawdre, Tondu and Sarn, three small geographically connected communities in Bridgend have been focused upon. While there are many ex-mining

communities that could have been the focus of this study, Abertillery is a particularly stark example of a mining town reduced by de-industrialization. Abertillery was once the second largest town in its county, but has changed much during and after deindustrialization. While Abertillery has experienced the resultant loss of local businesses, in contrast, the nearby former steel town of Ebbw Vale has benefited from large-scale regeneration programmes, including a large shopping centre, and work in progress on new educational and hospital facilities. Ynysawdre has been included as a comparison locale, as although it has connections with coalmining, it lies near the M4 motorway and has strong links to both national and international manufacturing investment. Both Abertillery and Ynysawdre will be described in more detail in chapter 3 - 'the locales'.

This project takes place within a much larger research context. Hudson and Sadler (1990) have focused upon the relationship between state policy and colliery closure, while a considerable amount of research has been conducted regarding the effects of colliery closure on communities formed around heavy industry. For example, Waddington et al (2001) have investigated the social and economic impact the decline of heavy industry has had on Britain's mining communities. Bennett, Beynon and Hudson have explored the 'social and spatial consequences' of industrial change in the coalfields of both Mansfield, Nottinghamshire and the Cynon Valley in South Wales (2000, p.1). Focusing on a wide range of community initiatives intended to improve the futures of these locales, these authors have documented from a sociological perspective the decline and marginalisation of former coalfields, and the sometimes devastating effects on the lives of those living within these locales. These studies and others, including Parry's (2003) exploration of the changing meaning of work in the South Wales valleys, have emphasized the need for continuing regeneration of former coalfields communities.

However, many researchers in this field have questioned the homogeneity of mining communities, (e.g. Ackers, 1996; Dicks and Van Loon, 1999; Parry, 2003; Strangleman et al, 1999), notions of which can impact upon the effectiveness of regeneration programmes. Particularly, Dicks has strongly challenged the myths surrounding notions

of 'typical' mining communities in South Wales through an exploration of the relationships people have with heritage sites such as Rhondda Heritage Park, and the 'imagined communities' these can construct (e.g. Dicks, 2000, 2002, 2004). This study acknowledges these arguments, and discusses notions of 'community' later in this chapter. This study does not argue for notions of homogeneity within or between mining communities. However, it does recognize that particularly powerful ways of understanding can come to be shared, either by entire communities, or by sub-groups within larger communities, (e.g. Jodelet, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2002; Moscovici, 2000). Such shared recognitions need to be identified in order to explore how people make sense of community life, and how they make sense of their own *individual* trajectories and imagined futures (e.g. Duveen, 2001).

Over many decades, schooling, along with coalmining has been a powerful institution through which people in valley communities have been able to make sense. Within the field of education, major research has also been conducted into the effects of economic downturn and possibilities for regeneration (e.g. Fevre, 1989; Brown and Lauder, 2003), and the concept of lifelong learning is central to the whole process of regeneration. While there are many institutions conducting research into lifelong learning, a great deal of work has taken place within Cardiff University. There is a commitment to interdisciplinary work and a recent review of education research from both sociological and psychological perspectives conducted at Cardiff suggests an extensive range of interests (Gorard, Crozier and Renold, 2002). These different approaches to investigation into education and learning have aimed to both extend educational research in general and contribute to the increase of education and training provision and participation in South Wales. From this extensive work it is clear that social elements play an important role in both school achievement and the choices individuals make regarding continued participation in education. Principal areas of investigation within a sociological approach include underachievement (e.g. Gorard and Smith, 2003) and differential attainment (e.g. Gorard, 2000; Gorard, Rees, and Salisbury, 2001), which has indicated that the interaction of social and economic elements should be considered when assessing educational achievement. Studies of the success of different types of school suggest that

socio-economic factors have a more powerful impact on academic attainment than the types of school children attend (e.g. Gorard, 2001; Gorard and Taylor, 2001). Wider social influences have been highlighted by the critiquing of the National Targets for Lifelong Learning, particularly its strong focus on lack of certificated education and training and its lack of consideration of informal adult learning (e.g. Gorard, Fevre and Rees, 1999; Gorard, Rees and Selwyn, 2000, 2002). Psychological research has also emphasized the importance of social elements. Work by Crozier and Skliopidou (2002) indicates the importance of school relationships, with the effect of bullying and name calling representing a threat to social identity, which can extend well into adulthood. This highlights the importance of subjective experiences of schooling and education to the understanding of why some people continue to engage with education during their lives while others do not, and why those who do continue choose different routes within the education system.

Previously much of the research relating to lifelong learning has taken the sociological approach to patterns of participation in education and training that emphasize the external constraints within which individuals are able to make their choices (e.g. Hodkinson, Sparkes and Hodkinson, 1996). However, this approach simplifies the complexities involved in the behaviour of individuals. More resources have been suggested to be required to help those most in need, but removing barriers, such as cost, time and lack of childcare will have only limited impact because:

'....those who failed at school often come to see post-school learning of all kinds as irrelevant to their needs and capabilities. Hence, not only is participation in further, higher and continuing education not perceived to be a realistic possibility, but also work-based learning is viewed as unnecessary'

(Rees et al., 1997, p.11).

Earlier studies suggest that it is possible to identify regularities in the educational experiences of individuals as they proceed through the life course. For example, different routes through compulsory schooling have been identified, based on performance at key

moments, such as the 11+ or 'common entrance' examinations (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980), and the concept of 'career trajectories' has been used to summarize the contrasting experiences of young people after passing the minimum school leaving age (Banks et al., 1992). Class and gender combined has been argued to allow for the prediction of the range of opportunities that an individual will be exposed to and thus the learning pathway that they are likely to take (Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980). However, formal adult participation in learning is now less prevalent, and less equally distributed between social groups than it was in the past (e.g. Gorard, Rees and Fevre, 1998). Non-participation is largely a product of people not seeing education as appropriate for them, and these views are structured by factors that occur relatively early in life. Over time factors such as social class, parental education, ethnicity and first language have become less important as predictors of post-compulsory participation. These factors have been replaced by early school experiences, which are becoming increasingly key determinants of later patterns of education (Gorard, Crozier and Renold, 2002). However, there remains some criticism of initiatives that deal almost exclusively with improvements in initial education or training (e.g. Gorard and Taylor, 2001).

A major springboard for this project has been the study of learning participation patterns in South Wales by Gorard, Rees and colleagues (e.g. Rees, Williamson and Istance, 1996; Gorard, Rees and Fevre, 1998; Gorard, Rees, and Fevre, 1999c), which indicates that definite relationships do exist between personal preferences, the choices based upon them, normative systems such as gender, class and ethnicity, and socialization within the social structure that impact upon learning patterns. Rees et al. (1997) have stated that in order to more clearly understand how alternative rationalities come to be socially constituted, these relationships need to be explored. In developing a social theory of lifelong learning Rees et al. acknowledge the fact that the social structure of actually available opportunities imposes a powerful constraint on individual choice in addition to the effects of socially constituted preferences and note the interaction between the two; that preferences can be shaped by both socialization and the reality of viable alternative actions. Gorard, Rees and Fevre (1999a) emphasize five interrelated determinants that influence choices regarding participation in lifelong learning. The sociological categories

of time, place, gender, family and initial schooling structure the following phase of the introduction.

Time

The context of learning opportunities experiences historical and intergenerational changes and it is within these differing contexts that individual experience of learning may be situated. Within the same time period people of dissimilar ages can produce a different likelihood of participation in training, and Gorard et al. (1997) found that younger respondents accepted training as part of employment, while older respondents often reported dramatic job changes with no accompanying training, as it was considered irrelevant. 'Typical' trajectories can also change over time (Antikainen et al., 1996), and the interaction of individual choices and restrictions on courses of educational action must be viewed in light of such differing and shifting backdrops. One key influence is the occurrence of transformations in the structure of available opportunities for education and training (Rees et al., 1997). Rees et al. found that more respondents in successive generations remained in school or college following the school leaving age, suggesting that employment prospects for younger cohorts differ from those of more experienced older generations. Changes in education provision illustrate the ways in which opportunities for learning can increase or reduce over time.

Such a reduction in learning opportunities has been experienced in industrial South Wales, with the collapse of nationalized industries, such as coal and steel. Within these industries initial and continuing training was provided by employers and led to promotion to supervisory and managerial level. This decrease in learning opportunities, along with the deterioration of the community-based learning provided by the Miner's Institutes have resulted in significantly decreased learning opportunities for recent generations, particularly for those men who could have expected to have followed their fathers into mining and steel working (Rees, 1997). Changes over time regarding education and employment opportunities have clearly been found to significantly affect people's lives. However, less work has been conducted regarding the ways in which change over time

influences how people are able to make sense of education and work, and negotiate periods of change in their lives. Further research needs to be undertaken to explore how notions of education and work are passed down through the generations living within particular locales. How are these understandings passed down from parents to children, and to grandchildren? And how are these accepted, rejected or modified by the younger generations? What this project aims to contribute is an understanding of how the availability of different experiences and opportunities provides different ways in which people view the worlds of work and learning, and how this can result in people subsequently coming to see themselves in a particular way in relation to employment and education. However, it is not only changes in the availability of jobs and education that implicate time in studies of locales; there are other dimensions of time that need to be explored and these will be considered later in the introduction.

Place

While previous studies have been sensitive to the geographies of locales, and these will be briefly reviewed here, the aim of this project is to contribute the psychological and the symbolic to an exploration of just how geographical and material features of a locale affects its residents far beyond practical facilitative or obstructive effects. However, this development will be considered at a more appropriate point in a subsequent section. The work of Rees, Gorard and colleagues has demonstrated the importance of place to social patterns of participation in learning, particularly how loss of industry can affect specific areas dramatically, with loss of both economy and related learning opportunities. Even within a relatively small region such as industrial South Wales, particular dominant industries have produced locally specific characteristic learning trajectories that vary from locale to locale (Gorard et al., 1997, working paper 7). Relatively recently, new types of industry, such as multinational manufacturing companies have introduced new and different training opportunities, particularly along the M4 motorway corridor. As the nationalized industries have declined in South Wales, many ex-employees have taken available employment requiring little or no training, and feel that once re-employed, further learning is unnecessary.

Industrial South Wales, with its industry linked learning provision, has provided very specific employment and learning opportunities, particularly for men (Istance and Rees, 1994). Regional implementation of national policies varies to reflect differences in local conditions regarding education and employment. For example, the government's introduction of Training and Enterprise Councils in 1988 made locally based organizations responsible for the appropriate training of young people, (Gorard and Rees, 2002), and this employer involvement has been shown to influence participation in, completion of and eventual outcome of nationally organized training programmes (Rees, Williamson and Istance, 1996). The area of Wales that Gorard and Rees studied possessed specific characteristics, with lower participation in job-related training than in all but one region in England and Wales; they even found clear distinctions in patterns of participation in education and training between the three South Wales areas they studied. However, while there has been important progress regarding participation patterns and local requirements, an aim of this current project is to gain a psychological understanding of how particular locales influence how people experience learning; how do residents come to understand education and their own and others' choices and behaviours regarding learning? How do these understandings allow them to imagine their futures? This question will be returned to in a later section of the introduction.

Gender

The issue of gender will also be elaborated upon in terms of the psychological and the symbolic in a subsequent section, as Rees, Gorard and colleagues use a very particular sociological approach in their consideration of gender and patterns of participation in education. Rees and Gorard's work presents the influences of place and time as powerfully affecting issues relating to gender, as gender is understood here as a dimension of the social world, based on social forces rather than biological fact. Therefore the intricate relationship between gender, place and time is inescapable. For example the structure of current local employment opportunities will have a direct effect on males' and females' access to training. Historically, South Wales has been one of the largest centres of learning in Britain (Gorard and Rees, 2002), but previously most of the

learning opportunities existed for men working in the mining industry. This has been a region of strongly demarcated gender roles, promoting a firmly embedded, conservative division of labour that has presented married women as domestic, non-economically active workers. Recently, the tendency in Wales is for women to work part-time in jobs that require little or no training (Banks et al., 1992; Gorard and Rees, 2002). It is still the women who face childcare responsibilities, and as combining part-time education with part-time employment does not attract the financial support that many full-time courses do, leaving students facing considerable economic costs and material risks, it can be a risky and thus unattractive option.

An additional risk of lifelong learning, and one that is often greater for women than men can be to personal relationships, as a woman's aspirations may go against social custom and expectations of the female role (Brine and Waller, 2004). Gorard and Rees (2002) cite a number of cases where the female respondents express what the researchers describe as 'enforced altruism', sacrificing their aspirations and careers for the sake of their marriages. Increased opportunities for women to stay on at school or enter training schemes following initial schooling have changed this pattern, and in South Wales extended initial education has been argued to be now relatively gender neutral (Gorard et al., 1999b). However, many practical barriers to education (e.g. childcare, financial concerns) affect relatively few teenage women extending their education, while a higher number of mature students might still experience these constraints to education and training. While education is being presented as the solution to high rates of unemployment, a question remains as to how women of different generations are able to respond to and navigate the often contradictory expectations present in their locale in order to imagine a future. Conversely, how are men able to see themselves in terms of education and employment when the patriarchal family, traditionally the origin of the roles of men and women, no longer provides the dominant blueprint for the family unit?

Family

The family offers a powerful influence on the formation of a sense of self, and sociological studies propose that family background, (e.g. education attainment of parents or occupation) is a key predictor of lifelong participation in education or training, as it is of success at school (Gorard et al., 1999c). Families are considered to be a key determinant of young people's educational performance (Gorard, Rees and Fevre, 1999a), and similar routes within families through compulsory education have been noted (Gorard and Rees, 2002). However, many studies of 'family' influences on participation in education have actually explored the influence of parents. Gorard and Rees found from the inclusion of parent-child combinations, that half the adult offspring reporting being lifelong learners had parents who were also lifelong learners, while more than half of those reporting no participating in learning past compulsory schooling were the children of non-participants. Where parent-child patterns of participation were markedly different a more recent trend towards greater lifelong participation was found. Again, the relationship with other social elements is important; time and place play a powerful role in parental views of the importance of schooling. For example when jobs were plentiful many parents encouraged their children to leave school early to enter employment, while the more recently limited employment possibilities have produced more mixed responses from parents; some encourage their children to stay on in school to improve their employment potential, while others see little value in attaining 'pieces of paper', if 'worthwhile' jobs are not available (McGivney, 2003). These studies make strong links between employment and education. However, any adequate consideration of parent-child influence within families must consider the ways that gender roles are embedded within them, how deep historical legacies are handed from generation to generation. Specifically, mining and steel working provided particularly powerful roles for men and embedded women within the sphere of domesticity. However, while social dimensions such as family and gender powerfully influence the construction of social identities, the foregrounding issue for this research is locale, and the focus is upon how the locale and the community powerfully influences family structure and social roles.

Within many families in mining and steel communities social roles were strongly governed by the industries that defined the locales, powerfully affecting the practices of family members. Masculine social identities constructed through experience below ground were perpetuated above ground, with the mine's presence above ground affecting the lives of the entire community; the buildings, dirt and noise of the mine were dominant in mining towns. Miners carried the mine above ground with them at the end of their shifts, carried the dirt and smell of the mine home with them to be dealt with by female members of the family. The supply of hot baths, clean clothing and food for men returning home was the responsibility of the women. The traditional practices of men and women provided powerful networks with which family members could come to understand and participate in the worlds of work and education. These strongly demarcated family roles have been affected by the dramatic changes to local industry, thus this project foregrounds a sense of relationality; the recognition of how historical legacies bind together roles, practices and people's abilities to think about their lives and imagine their futures.

Initial Education

So “[h]istory provides us with narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from and where we should be going.” (Liu and Hilton, 2005, p.1) - the historical legacies of locales suggest the roles that people may play, and delineate the boundaries that circumscribe their lives. Notions surrounding traditional practices bestow access to certain social contexts, while denying or limiting access to others, strongly affecting personal experience. Particular experiences of schooling are likely to remain with people throughout their lives. A poor experience of compulsory education has been suggested to produce later passivity towards education and training (Hand et al., 1994), while personal failure at school also reduces the likelihood of participating in further episodes of formal education due to the requirements of many further and higher education courses (Gambetta, 1987). Thus those who have done well at school are more likely to continue in full-time later education (Istance and Rees, 1994). However, initial education does not contribute merely by constraining or facilitating access to further learning opportunities,

as in some cases actual failure at school has been found to stimulate further learning episodes (Gorard, 1997c). This emphasizes the importance of personal understandings of learning and what it means to be a learner. However, while Gorard and Rees highlight the very real impact of educational attainment on future career trajectories, with formal qualifications facilitating or restricting access to further learning episodes, it does not provide a complete explanation for the power of the school to influence people's later choices regarding participation in education.

While jobs are plentiful and people are oriented towards a field of production schooling is seen by many to fulfill a specific role within the community; that of the provision of compulsory education before the gaining of employment at the minimum leaving age. However, economic changes have meant that the demands placed upon education by different generations of local people have altered considerably, and schools have responded through the provision of very different education practices. A focus on initial schooling needs to emphasize the ways in which the school context provides frames of reference, which regulate young people's interpretations of their academic attainment, their anticipation of their expected social roles, and their understandings of the role of education and its appropriateness to their own projected life trajectories. Additionally, an exploration of people's understandings of their own potential to achieve in educational contexts must also take into account shifts in the nature and purpose of education as locales experience social and economic change. Bernstein's (1971) notion of 'framing' promotes consideration of the relationship between local culture and education provision, and the powerful and lasting effects of schooling, not only in terms of educational attainment, but also in terms of people's understandings of their place within the world of education. This approach sees schools as producers of a 'regulative discourse', reproducing dominant ideologies to position children according to cultural features, communicating to them what they can expect to learn and who can be expected to succeed. Teacher expectations influence the 'instructional discourse' used in teacher-student interaction, which consolidates assigned positionings and expectations for the future as young people acquire the 'realization rules' with which they are able to think and communicate about their education and employment futures. Thus classrooms frame

understandings of roles according to dominant features of their locale, such as geographical location, work roles and opportunities, and the delivery of formal education can circumscribe people's futures at an early age.

However, people of all ages experience learning contexts, so the problematic here is the concept of learning. Emphasis needs to be placed upon the different learning opportunities made available for people living in these locales, both over time and for people of different ages and genders. How do the different ways of thinking about learning, heavily influenced by the school, influence what is taken up and used to construct a sense of self? What is the legacy of the changes in education over three generations? The purpose of education has altered to accommodate social and economic changes within specific locales but, while education is promoted as the solution to high unemployment, can it compensate for the loss of the jobs that provided such strongly embedded identities within locales previously defined by heavy manual labour? While younger generations have no personal memories of heavy industry, for the older generations can education fill the psychological space that redundancy has left? Key questions relate to the identities offered by 'the school' over time. Who are people allowed to be? What legitimating roles are offered or denied? In order to take them up, people must be able to imagine the opportunities being offered to them as relevant and available to them. An early, and enduringly powerful, source of their imagination with regard to education and work trajectories is the school.

Trajectories

A concept of trajectory is fundamental to a social theory of lifetime learning, as trajectories do reflect a socially constituted structure of learning opportunities and socially differentiated access to them (Banks et al., 1992). The approach of Gorard, Rees and colleagues (e.g. Rees et al., 1997; Gorard, Rees and Fevre, 1998; Gorard and Rees, 2002) towards developing a social theory of lifetime learning emphasizes a complex set of social procedures through which lifetime learning pathways are determined. Rees et al.'s (1997) study highlights two elements involved in the formation of lifetime learning

patterns. Firstly, the pathway, or trajectory, that an individual takes is powerfully influenced by the resources related to their social backgrounds, as social and financial resources differ between groups; for example, the very different educational experiences of middle-class females and working-class males. Secondly, the individual's personal learning history will impact upon his or her ability to utilize the available learning opportunities. Much sociological research has suggested that early experiences and choices lead people through generally predictable routes through the stages of lifetime learning, and Gorard et al. (1997) have identified five major characteristic sequences of learning experiences throughout the life course. These are 'Lifelong' (continued participation during the life course), 'delayed' (late return to education), 'transitional' (participation immediately following compulsory schooling) 'immature' (still in compulsory schooling) and 'non-participant' (no participation following compulsory education).

Gorard and Rees (2002) propose that trajectories can be accurately predicted on the basis of characteristics that are acknowledged by the time an individual reaches school leaving age. They argue that, while people do have some choice in their future engagement with education and training, choice exists within a network of opportunities structured by social influences and expectations. This clearly situates the individual within relevant social and economic contexts, and implies that participation in lifetime learning is shaped by a complex set of social processes. A socio-cultural psychological approach also emphasizes agency; that individuals take up what is available within the setting and re-work it to create a narrative that maintains a level of coherence. This highlights the fundamental importance of locale, as both place and time powerfully affect how people make sense of available education, training and work choices. In order to imagine a future trajectory, a person must be able to imagine a range of possibilities open to them. People need to imagine what the possible employment and education opportunities will be, and what social expectations exist regarding men and women of particular ages and abilities in order to be able to construct personal expectations, hopes and plans for the future. Individuals sometimes reject the more common course of action and deviate from the pathway that most of their contemporaries take. The exploration of the relationship

between personal learning histories and forms of thinking about opportunities needs to be extended in an attempt to explain diversity. Why do certain people, regardless of academic qualifications and practical barriers strive to maintain an engagement with education while others choose not to? These possibilities are provided by the person's experience within the locale itself; the locale sets the parameters within which certain trajectories are made available, while others are not. These parameters shift over time as locales undergo change, which alters the range of possibilities that individuals can imagine for themselves, including the ways in which they understand the value of education and employment, and can imagine the likelihood of their own participation and success.

This has implications for the role of education, particularly within locales that are struggling to re-identify themselves following major economic and social shifts. Pressure has increased for the neo-liberal worker to forge a gainful and useful career trajectory and education is generally promoted as a profitable and expected investment. However, institutions offering an education that bears no relation to the local work environment do not encourage or serve local people. While informal learning is often encouraged, much of the emphasis remains on the gaining of certificates that, while providing tangible evidence of success, perpetuates the notion that 'real' learning is something that can be formally recognized, and in many cases is unrelated to 'real life'. Major changes in compulsory education have focused on curriculum re-organization and the introduction of new types of qualification, such as the Welsh Baccalaureate, and much post-compulsory education also places emphasis on formal credentials as a way to expand people's futures. However, this is a narrow conceptualization of education, and work that identifies routes towards educational qualifications, and barriers impeding the attainment of these is inadequate to the understanding of people's education and work trajectories.

An alternative consideration of the negotiation of education and work trajectories can be developed from the socio-cultural psychological literature, which allows an exploration of the ways in which people's unique personal histories underpin their ability to make sense of education throughout their lives. While education is promoted as the route into

employment and out of the limitations set up by many post-industrial locales, education alone without psychological access to related alternative futures might not be enough. If particular careers are not available within a locale, or if local employment is limited to low paid, low status jobs requiring few academic qualifications, how can formal education encourage and support imagined futures for people, particularly those who do not wish to leave their locale? In order to achieve and maintain student engagement schools and colleges need to contribute more than the preparation of students to pass examinations. Education institutions need to satisfy multiple roles including the cultivation of ways for individuals to imagine themselves forward through education. So how should learning be conceptualized, and what should the role of education be in the widening of the possible future trajectories of young people in these locales?

This thesis is based firmly within an educational context. Although it has been led by the general locales selected for Gorard and Rees's (1997) sociological study and it extends their exploration of participation in education in valley communities, it is not simply a sociological study. It is attempt to understand enduring patterns of disaffection in localities, by introducing psychological considerations to Gorard and Rees's sociological research. Through an exploration of the ways in which people *make sense* of their trajectories by drawing upon material and symbolic aspects of their environments, it may be possible to describe something about the culture within a locale. Although this study introduces a much-needed psychological approach to Gorard and Rees's sociological research, its main contribution is not to sociology nor to psychology, but to the field of education. Thus the use of psychological theory is by necessity lighter in touch.

1.2. Theorising education and learning

The following section briefly introduces some of the ways in which learning has been theorised, particularly the emphasis of the working class man in the history of education, an area of focus that burgeoned during the 1970s. The availability and accessibility of

different types of employment from a viewpoint of social class and inequality has formed the basis for many sociological theories of education, with social class the main category that has underpinned discussions of the reproduction of social inequality. For Marx, education was seen as the means to liberate the working class from the false consciousness that prevented them from acknowledging the repression they lived with (Rikowski, 2001). Education would provide the young working class with the tools they needed in order to reflect on their lives and mobilise to resist subjugation. Such Marxist tenets have underpinned education in Wales. Historically, education has been understood as the means with which to escape traditional working class roles, with the miner's education schemes illustrating the power education was seen to possess. While mining provided high pay and comparatively superior status within a working class locale, the relatively militant miners of South Wales recognized the social strata pervading a life governed by the collieries, and many understood the value of education, particularly for children who might avoid the dangers of mining. However, the working class have long been reported as underachieving in education (e.g. Smith, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Willis, 1977), and schools have been seen as contributing to social reproduction by preparing young people to take up expected adult social roles based on their social class.

1.2.1 Conceptualisations of education

One of the major conceptualisations of identification with education, Bowles and Gintis's (1976) Correspondence Principle, a strong Marxist capitalist explanation, argued that children's school success is determined to a great extent by their social class. Although within critical psychology 'social class' has been argued to be crucial to experiences of education (e.g. Ostrove and Cole, 2003), more recently social scientists have focused less on the concept of 'class' and more on social inequality and social status through the emphasis of social strata based on skill, occupational status and income (Rikowski, 2001). While individuals within the lower strata are expected to overcome obstacles in order to achieve success, explanations of continued suppression remain entrenched in issues of labour and production, and ignore the psychological, portraying the individual

as passive and lacking agency. Within sociology the term 'learner identity' has been used as a typology of socially endowed structural identities, with a lack of explanation of how individuals interact with their environments. Willis' (1977) development of such Marxist views emphasized how power relations produce both people and modes of resistance, and introduced a notion of agency to provide an explanation of *how* people resist the dominant ideologies and cause counter-cultures to emerge. Willis presents people from working class backgrounds as understanding, through notions of social class their future chances of attaining particular educational and work goals. Specifically, Willis describes the way that working class young men 'create a culture of resistance and opposition to authority' and gain a sense of pride through involvement with a counter culture that devalues academic work and rejects the capitalist system of education.

Willis does move from a strongly Marxist view towards a cultural studies approach through an emphasis on the importance of practice and subculture in addition to economics (Willis, 2001). However, a description of a united group identity organized around a counter culture fails to address the complexities surrounding notions of identity and engagement with education. While shedding light upon often misunderstood social groups, such explanations merely lead deeper into issues surrounding the subcultures themselves. Despite the introduction of a strong focus upon both agency and resistance, and the issue of gender/class interaction, Willis's research maintains a narrow focus on the development of a particular type of white, working class masculine education and work identity, rather than allowing full consideration of the complex and often very different ways that class and gender interact to understand alternative forms of engagement (e.g. Weiler, 2003). Willis also pushes into the background a multitude of alternative male youth identities, such as working class boys who *do* strive for academic success, who refuse to accept the social positions they are offered. In general, explanations that focus upon resistance through subcultures fail to provide an explanation of how education can re-engage young people who have become disengaged with schooling. Alternatively attention needs to be directed towards the detail of pedagogy. What is happening to make young people disengage themselves from formal education? How might pedagogy maintain engagement among otherwise disaffected youth? And

how might it work to re-engage those who have become alienated from the world of education? A socio-cultural psychological approach offers a way to explore these questions, particularly standpoint that stems from Vygotskian theory, as it considers Marxist principles from a different perspective to that of sociologists.

1.2.2 Mainstream psychological approaches to learning

Recent turns within psychology, including neo-Vygotskian and socio-cultural approaches have provided a range of new conceptual tools for overcoming issues raised by mainstream psychology. A socio-cultural psychological approach is important here as it draws together the social and the psychological; specifically, the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984), set within the socio-cultural approach prioritises social and cultural influences on sense-making. Many mainstream psychological approaches to education and learning have not adequately considered the inherent problems of studying the individual and the social as separate dimensions. While psychology has attempted to conceptualize learning, the traditional approach has tended to focus on cognitive processes and structures, such as the storage of information (e.g. encoding and decoding), and levels of memory, along with the development of language, measurement of intelligence, individual motivational factors and individual knowledge construction. When relationships have been considered, these have been between different aspects of the same individual, such as Duff et al.'s (2004) investigation of the link between personality, approach to learning and academic performance. The traditional assumption has therefore been that learning is 'a possession of individuals that can be found inside their heads' (Murphy, 1999, p.17). Where people have been considered as living within a social world, it has been in terms of social learning; of imitating behaviour modelled by others (e.g. Bandura, 1977). However the focus for this has remained the cognitive processes resulting from social experiences.

Hence a divide has remained within the field of education. The sociology of education has continued to focus upon patterns of education participation and achievement and the

constraints that persist for sectors of society, while the psychology of education, although considering group interaction in specific settings and cultural factors, has tended to take characteristics of the individual as its focus of analysis (e.g. motivation, achievement). There have been many attempts to deal with this central problem in social theory. For example, Latour (1987) has argued that new knowledge must be studied 'in action' within social settings, while Giddens (1997) has pointed out the deeply-embedded nature of ways of thinking about the world within societies and groups. Within social psychology, Walkerdine (1984) has emphasized the ways in which gender and class location influence education and career opportunities and engagement. Discursive psychology (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) has attempted to deal with the divide by investigating how language functions to shape the ways that people construct versions of events; how language delimits knowledge.

From a socio-cultural standpoint, prominent researchers such as Holland and Lave (2001) have illustrated how persons are constructed through relationships with education and other activities. Specifically, Lave (2008) has critiqued approaches that separate 'learning' from 'everyday life', arguing that learning does not take the person out of everyday life into some other 'higher' realm, but that learning is an integral part of everyday life. As people live their lives they are not aware of existing or evolving patterns; they are not able to accurately predict their own futures. Lived lives are characterized by the very fact that they are not configured in a recognizable way, but are lived by people who strive to make sense of the unfamiliar and unexpected in order to live their daily lives. Thus, like sociological approaches, a mainstream psychological approach is inadequate for exploring the dynamic relationship between the individual and the social and how this relationship results in the formation of social identities related to learning. An approach is required that can bring together notions of the individual and the social as mutually constructive, and this project re-introduces the psychological to the social, through emphasis on the subjectivities that are constructed within and by the social; the subjective meaning making of the individual immersed in social context. A socio-cultural approach takes into account the social nature of human development; how

people are actively imagining possible education futures and how the social sets the parameters that make it possible to imagine some futures and not others.

1.3 A socio-cultural approach to learning

A socio-cultural psychological approach re-focuses the analytical lens away from views of learning as a cognitive function or process, often unrelated to everyday life, and also away from class and economics, particularly Marxist views of workers becoming subsumed with material resources and economic and political procedures, and produced as human capital within the industry through the contribution of their physical labour. Socio-cultural approaches emphasize that the individual cannot be separated from the context in which he or she operates, and the dynamic relationship of these two aspects must be the focus of exploration. The theoretical problem here is how to tackle the individual-social divide.

There are many socio-cultural approaches to learning and the majority stem from the work of Vygotsky, whose own work was influenced by the theories of Hegel and Marx. Hegel's dialectical approach to history was that new ideas are synthesized through the resolution of the conflict of existing ideas, and that due to major historical shifts people not only live differently, but their forms of thinking become different (Ravenscroft, Wegerif and Hartley, 2007). This approach emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the social; the way that a person's social world sets parameters that facilitate and constrain who they become. Hegel's theory emphasizes the relationship between the individual and the social, as '[i]ndividual thought and social reality need to be understood as mutually interdependent, mutually constitutive and mutually transformative' (Howarth, 2001, p.11). However, whereas Hegel's notion of conflict was one of ideas, Marx's notion was one of social and economic conflict, and he believed that ideas merely justified particular materialistic interests. Marx developed the concept that at any point in history, a person's material life - how they work and produce goods - determines what they think. From these ideas Engels developed the theory that people

were able to alter their environment and plan for the future through the development and use of tools. Both Marx and Engels saw tool use as inherently social, while influencing the thinking of individuals. Vygotsky extended these ideas to include the development and use of psychological tools (Cole, 1990). A basic tenet of Vygotskian theory is the formation of consciousness through experience of the social; that everything that appears in the interpsychological - history, culture, social settings - provides the tools for the intrapsychological - the construction of the internal, the personal. While the physical environment constrains practice and thought, dominant ideologies also guide what people think about and how they think about them. Psychological tools provided by the social include counting systems and speech, which are directed towards the mastery of behaviours, and Luria's work in Central Asia in the early 1930s has shown how the appropriation of psychological tools through formal schooling does enable people to think in more abstract ways (Luria, 1976).

Just as the social sets the parameters for levels of abstract thought, it circumscribes those for making sense of life trajectories, including education and work, and for imagining possible futures. A socio-cultural psychological approach that stems from Vygotskian theory provides a way to consider key questions. What is available in the social over time for different generations to negotiate learning and work trajectories? How do unique histories within generations influence the ways in which education comes to be understood? How does the social shape the internal in terms of identification with education, training and work?

Strongly implicated in Vygotsky's notion of the interpsychological and intrapsychological, and indeed in the Marxist formation of consciousness through bodily experience, are the concepts discussed earlier - those of time, place, family, gender and initial education. From a socio-cultural psychological standpoint these provide the symbolic material with which people forge life trajectories, and which allows them to imagine the possibilities available to them. Packer's (2000) study of participation in education in Michigan before, during and after the loss of the hugely dominant GM auto plant illustrates just how powerfully the social world structures the ways that people are

able to value practices and imagine themselves forward. Thus an exploration of how people negotiate their learning and work trajectories requires a multi-dimensional approach that can allow the emphasis to shift between different, but interrelated foci.

1.3.1. 'Planes of analysis' approach

Such an approach allows discussion of the various planes of analysis that impact upon people's lives, and how individuals can understand and interact with these in very different ways. One early such concept that attempted to align the psychological and the social is that of Bronfenbrenner (1979), based on systems theory. His notion of nested systems - micro-, meso-, exo- and macro-systems - was intended to illustrate the importance of the interrelatedness of individuals to children's development. Micro-systems refer to children's experiences and interactions with people in everyday settings, while meso-systems are the ways that different micro-systems interact, e.g. do they support or conflict with each other? Bronfenbrenner conceptualized exo-systems as those in which children took no part, but which impacted upon their lives, such as their parent's employment affecting their availability to care for their children, while he described macrosystems as relating to hegemonic beliefs and dominant institutions that set the parameters for social activity. However, as his conceptualization of the exo-system attests, Bronfenbrenner's focus was upon the ways in which the different 'systems' supported, or not, the development of children. He did not place primary emphasis upon the subjective experience of the individual, such as how personal understandings of opportunities and responsibilities in the wider social world contribute to the construction of desires and expectations and influence how people are able to project a future for themselves.

An alternative approach that employs multiple lenses affords a much more complex understanding of how locales both influence, and are influenced by the people who reside within them. A strategy that considers multiple planes of analysis based on Rogoff's (1990) concept of personal, interpersonal and institutional/societal planes provides a way to explore how learning is embedded within the contexts of the different planes and how

each influences the others. Wenger asserts that communities of practice entail 'a set of relations among persons, activity and the world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice' (1991, p.98), thus emphasizing the crucial nature of the interrelated analytical planes. For Wenger, the social structure of learning and work practices, such as power relations, define the conditions for learning, and participation in these cultural practices is fundamental to learning. It is this personal experience of learning contexts that is of major concern to this project. But how do people recognize and make sense of communities of practice? And what is meant by 'learning'? Again we return to the notion of formation of consciousness. For many people 'learning' relates directly to those subjects and activities that result in the attainment of certificates and diplomas, while for others, their realm of experience tells them 'real' learning is something else, somewhere other than the school or college. The history, geography and industry of a locale powerfully impacts upon understandings of learning, what can be seen as 'real' and valuable, or of no consequence and a waste of time.

Rogoff's (1995) notion of three planes of analysis addresses the role of wider social elements in relation to people becoming, or not becoming, part of a community of practice. There is a strong focus on institutional provision of culturally organized activities that powerfully influence people's participation in specific locale practices related to education and work. This emphasizes the geography and the historical legacies of locales, particularly its education provision and industrial heritage. The interpersonal plane considers mutual involvement and engagement patterns of individuals within communities of practice (Rogoff, 1990), including personal experiences of schooling, and later employment. The personal plane allows for the exploration of people's own understandings of themselves in relation to different social practices, and how participation or non-participation in these social practices strongly influences the ways in which individuals understand and deal with later transitions. Locales circumscribe so powerfully the possible futures that people are able to imagine, and a 'planes of analysis' approach provides a set of analytical tools that returns the psychological to the materiality of the locale. Place and time can be explored, not as 'factors', as defined by Gorard and

Rees, but as socio-historical resources, from which people draw to undertake the psychological effort needed to make sense of their daily lives, to experience and make sense of ‘learning’, and to forge education and work trajectories.

1.4 Understanding the locale

For a study of this kind place and time cannot be considered in isolation; the main focus lies upon how the changes locales undergo over time impact upon the trajectories of people living within them. While a ‘planes of analysis’ strategy can be applied to national or even global contexts, it brings *locale* as a crucial plane of analysis firmly into any exploration of individual experience of learning and work, and the following section provides a brief socio-historical overview of the growth and decline of industrial South Wales. What is crucial for a study focusing on how people of different generations have experienced learning within a specific locale is the mapping of some of the features of that locale. A study of learning experiences cannot adequately explore trajectories and transitions without an insight into the affordances of the locale, with which local people make sense of their lives and the lives of others. The physical features of the South Wales valleys, such as its coal and its many narrow valleys, which have provided limited transport links and allowed a limited horizon, have been paramount in the development of the region. However, it is clear that a ‘locale’ is something much more complex than a physically defined area supporting a socially defined community, therefore mapping must be taken much further than geographical and logistical features. A study of individual meaning making within a locale must also consider historical, material, institutional and symbolic elements. Locales are complex multi-dimensional networks constructed over time, with particular architecture, shops, schools, employment opportunities and expectations, transport links, sports, social traditions and so on. This study focuses particularly upon education, industry, and work and employment to gain an understanding of people’s relationship with, and participation in lifelong learning. However, a multiple planes strategy retains the ability to take into account those aspects of daily life with which people forge notions of who they are and who they can become.

The South Wales coalfield has provided some very specific affordances over time with which individuals have made sense of their education and employment experiences, and imagined their own possible futures.

While locales have specific geographical locations and particular physical features, they also possess unique histories and historical relationships with the wider world. Thus locales can be understood as networks of complex dimensions, each affecting the other as the locale experiences both minor and major shifts over time. While some of the affordances provided by a locale can be enduring, social and economic shifts can dramatically alter the affordances locales provide for local people to construct and manage their lives. This conceptualisation provides a sense of different frames of analysis, that in order to understand how people within a locale make sense of education attention must be paid to historical and geographical features, as well as the institutions that have played, or play a role within the community. Crang's (1998) consideration of cultures of production describes how the contrast between the landscape and architectural features of industrialisation and the farmland regions they were set within are identified as clearly setting up the boundaries of mining locales. The South Wales coalfield possesses a distinctive history based on the physical presence of large coal reserves that were located, not under relatively flat landscapes as in the cases of many English collieries, but within clearly demarcated valleys. These valleys also supported heavy industry based on metal, such as iron and were home to people who possessed a strong community identity and who enjoyed the material affordances - money, property and education - that the industries provided.

1.4.1 A brief history of the South Wales industrial region

The iron industry began in South Wales in the mid 18th century, with steel manufacturing becoming dominant during the industrial development of the mid 19th century. The coal industry, in particular, increased massively in South Wales during the latter half of the 19th century; while the total UK output almost trebled during this time, output in the

South Wales coalfields quadrupled, accounting for two-fifths of Britain's total coal exports by 1880 (Humphrys, 1972). By the early part of the 20th century the coal industry had reached its peak, with 271,000 people employed in the mines in 1920. However, during the inter-war years both coal production and metal manufacture were adversely affected by the depression era, and by 1939 the South Wales coalfield supported a much-reduced workforce of 139,000 (Gorard and Rees, 2002)

The Second World War contributed to the industrialization of South Wales due to the re-location of a number of essential factories and services to Wales, which was considered safer than the east of England. These facilities included ordnance factories, servicing depots and aluminium works, which introduced new skills to South Wales and also increased employment opportunities for women. These opportunities, coupled with an increased need for coal during the War years resulted in South Wales becoming visible as an area of high production. However, during the immediate post-War years the British coal industry suffered two ultimately devastating blows. The increasing development of overseas coal industries, along with a period of relatively inexpensive oil resulted in a global decrease in dependence on coal. The National Union of Mineworkers formed in 1944, and an attempt in 1947 to safeguard both coal mining and its jobs was made when the industry was nationalized, but technological modernisation and government investment could not prevent the decline of the industry. Mining jobs decreased by 6,000 between 1944 and 1960, but during the late 1950s, the British Rail transition from steam locomotives to diesel engines began to add further pressure to an industry already struggling to be competitive in the global market, and between 1960 and 1970 eighty-six collieries closed with a further loss of 46,000 jobs (Rees and Rees, 1983). By 1979 the coal industry supported just 30,000 jobs in South Wales (Howell, 1987).

Following the War, the decommissioning of war-related factories, made available both factory accommodation and a skilled labour force, and presented South Wales as a region prepared for industrial development (Humphrys, 1972). During the 1970s new inward investment in manufacturing and service industries increased, with particularly strong investment from overseas companies. This growth, however, has failed to prevent the

social and economic disadvantage experienced by those living in former mining locales. The South Wales miners had for three decades developed a reputation for militancy (Williams, 1998) and, in 1984 when the government announced yet further pit closures they were strongly resisted by coal miners throughout the UK, with the mineworkers in South Wales providing the staunchest support of industrial action. In North Wales, where only 1,000 men were employed by the mines an initial, relatively low 35% of miners taking strike action dropped to just 10% by the end of the industrial action in 1985. In complete contrast, 99.6% of the 21,500 mineworkers in South Wales went on strike, with 93% persisting until the end (BBC, 2007). This powerful identification with mining resulted in a massive sense of betrayal and loss among miners following the breaking of the strike and the subsequent mass redundancies (e.g. Wengraf, 2000). The alternatives to mining were not the same throughout Wales; the South Wales coalfield region was identified in an extraordinary way by coal, with employment here for men greatly dominated by coal industry jobs. This provided a powerful set of social and historical resources related to masculinity, which influenced both men and women's reactions to the potential total loss of mining in South Wales, and the openness of local men to alternative employment, often in the relatively low paid manufacturing sector. Thus the enduring resistance of the South Wales miners during the miner's strike was intended to protect not only men's jobs but also an accepted way of life in a region that had long been applauded for its massive contribution to the coal industry.

The overall impact of the loss of mining upon South Wales was massive, as huge numbers of proud, healthy, formerly well-paid workers were faced with either undertaking relatively low paid, low status employment or accepting unemployment. Traditionally, the majority of women in South Wales had been involved only in domestic life - in 1951 only a quarter of women living in Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire were in paid work, compared to a British average of one third (Williams, 1998). Women's time was concentrated on homemaking, child rearing and taking care of male family members and lodgers who often worked conflicting shifts. Traditionally many available jobs for women had involved domestic work, such as those 'in service' with wealthy local families, or cleaning, cooking and doing laundry work for local businesses,

and often ceased on marriage. In recent decades, the influx of manufacturing jobs has increased the number of women working within the South Wales Valley communities, and factory work has replaced domestic service as key employment for women, as the part-time employment it makes available allows women to integrate paid employment and raising a family (Gorard and Rees, 2002).

Wales has traditionally been accepted as a region in which 'learning' is valued highly. However, it has fared poorly in tables of assessment compared to other regions in the UK (Selwyn and Gorard, 2002). It has been in Wales that a particularly clear two-track system has existed and continues to exist (Gorard, Rees and Fevre, 1999a). The selective grammar/secondary system identified potential achievers at an early age, and encouraged this 'elite' into academic careers while the majority of children were guided into non-academic work. Within the South Wales coalfields the dominant presence of heavy industry allowed massive numbers of young men to be funneled through the education system before feeding into the mines or the steelworks at minimum school leaving age. Young women took up work in the domestic sphere until marriage. Thus this selective system created both an educational and social divide in which many working class people ceased to view secondary education as relevant to their lives, and this was not eased by the introduction of a comprehensive education system, as potentially high achieving pupils remained the primary focus of the schools (Brown, 1987). Currently, schooling in Wales is argued to be failing to provide an adequate basis and encouragement for academic attainment or post-compulsory engagement with education.

1.5 The two study locales

The study focuses on two locales within industrial South Wales; Abertillery in Blaenau Gwent and the Ynysawdre/Tondu /Sarn area (from now to be referred to as Ynysawdre) in the local authority area of Bridgend. Abertillery has experienced dramatic changes due to the loss of heavy industry, while the Ynysawdre locale has fared differently due to a dual focus on both mining and manufacturing in the area, but has also experienced the

loss of major employers in both sectors. A full description of the locales can be found in chapter 3. However, a brief consideration of historical, industrial and educational features is relevant here in order to introduce the lived locales that are the result of constantly evolving complex networks of affordances.

1.5.1 Abertillery

Until the 1950s Abertillery, in Blaenau Gwent was a thriving town experiencing a high level of employment in heavy industry, including that offered by the local foundry, the seven collieries within walking distance of local men, and the massive steelworks in nearby Ebbw Vale, to which men were ferried frequently during the day and night by local buses. However, the town suffered the closure of all seven collieries between the 1950s and 1980s. Its foundry moved out of Abertillery before closing, and the steelworks, once employing thousands of Abertillery men began making redundancies in the 1970s before closing completely in 2002 (Museum curator, personal communication, 20 January, 2007). This loss of employment has resulted in the dramatic decline of the town; its cinemas have closed, the once thriving shopping centre is now relatively poor, with local people having to travel to Newport or Ebbw Vale for anything more than the basics (personal conversations during fieldwork, 2006). Local people also face the prospect of either travelling outside the locale for employment or taking up poorly paid work in local factories. Although government initiatives such as Communities First and Working Links maintain a visible presence in the centre of the town and promote skills training, the loss of the collieries has meant that Abertillery no longer sends a large contingent of local men to local colleges. Along with the closure of heavy industry, Abertillery railway station also closed in 1963, further strengthening the message that the town, like many other valley communities had reached ‘an advanced stage of obsolescence’ (Humphrys, 1972).

1.5.2 Ynysawdre

In contrast, Bridgend until recently represented an area that was benefiting from the investment made by overseas companies. Unlike Abertillery it is not classified as a Communities First area, but is currently suffering from major redundancies from both national and international companies. The coal industry was extremely important to the Ynysawdre locale, and employed many local men, however, between 1959 and 1979 the locale saw the closure of all but one of its collieries, Ocean, which was worked until 1985 (Garw Valley: official guide, 1994). However, the geographical location of Ynysawdre, at the entrance to the Llynfi, Garw and Ogmore valleys and adjacent to an M4 motorway junction, has meant that it did not suffer the same fate as Abertillery. Due to far superior road and rail links alternative employment in manufacturing has been more easily accessed. Until relatively recently furniture manufacturing provided a high number of jobs for men, with clothing factories employing many women. However, the vast majority of large furniture companies have ceased operating, and the industrial estates now house a number of smaller sofa manufacturers, which employ a vastly reduced workforce.

1.6 Levels of Analysis: from the individual to the collective and back again

Over time industrial South Wales has provided material and cultural resources that have circumscribed specific practices and particular patterns of behaviours and interaction. Remaining a contested area is the matter of *how* culture circulates within collectives, and how individuals use this to make sense of daily life. People engage with culture through practices that are made available in their locale, such as those related to education and work. The category of culture is but one level of analysis, and an issue that must be considered here is the particular level of explanation that can underpin empirical work. Doise posits four different levels, arguing that ‘theories are designed to capture different aspects of reality’ (1986, p.11). Studies of cognitive organisation operate at the intra-personal level, while those of individuals within a given situation work at the inter-

personal, or situational level. The positional level comes into play when consideration is taken regarding pre-existing social positionings of individuals, which may influence interaction within a given social setting. This third level strongly comes into play for a study focusing upon people's memories of their experiences within education and work settings. However, the fourth level, introduced by Lerner's (1971) experiments, also specifically relates to the theoretical standpoint of this study. The ideological level emphasises the power of collectively constructed systems of beliefs, representations, values and norms to validate and maintain an established social order (Doise, 1986, p.15). One way to integrate the different levels of analysis is through the concept of social representations, which maintains a strong focus upon the social construction of culture and its power to constrain knowledge, understanding and choices.

Early social psychology emphasised the interrelatedness of the individual and the social, with Wundt's 'Völkerpsychologie' contributing a psychological approach to the study of people that considered both individual and cultural perspectives (Flick, 1998). Wundt proposed that social psychology is the study of 'those mental products which are created by a community of human life and are, therefore, inexplicable in terms merely of individual consciousness since they presuppose the reciprocal action of many' (1916, in Hogg, 2008, p.179). Following Wundt, Durkheim also believed that psychological study of the individual could not explain collectivist behaviour, and argued that this was the province of the new discipline of sociology. The resulting split between sociology and psychology led to the creation of a social psychology that was required to account for collective and group phenomena as a separate level of analysis to that of 'the individual' and 'personality', but which continued to prioritise the individual as the level of explanation. Early work by social psychologists attempted to reconcile the psychological and the sociological (e.g. Lewin, 1933; Sherif, 1935; Sherif and Sherif, 1964), a recurring issue has been an under-emphasis of the role of the socially constructed self in group interaction (Hogg, 2007).

Originally developed as an alternative to theories based on the individual personality (e.g. Adorno et al, 1950) and those focusing on small group interactions, Social Identity

Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), has made an important contribution to attempts to bridge the social and individual. The theory has as its focus social identity defined in terms of specific group memberships. Of key importance are socially constructed beliefs about the nature and relation of one social group to other groups, along with how group affiliations influence group behaviour, and how socio-cognitive processes related to social identity are articulated (Hogg, 2008). Tajfel's earlier introduction of the term 'social identity' describes the ways in which systems of social categorizations construct and define an individual's place in society, along with the value significance that is attached to this. Self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner, et al, 1987) extended social identity theory, with a particular focus upon the categorization process, describing self-categorization as depersonalising self-perception, with individuals representing and experiencing self and other as relatively interchangeable members of a collective (Hogg, 2000, p.401). Within social identity theory and self-categorization theory, threats to self-identity and group identity are dealt with by different coping mechanisms (Turner et al, 1987). Social mobility involves the motivation to either physically leave a group or psychologically detach from it, and social change entails the alteration of group dynamics by challenging collectively held views of one or more groups.

Social identity theorists emphasise the importance of psychological salience, that each psychological event depends on the state of the individual as well as the environment, and thus have contributed to the debate surrounding the individual/social divide. However, critics (e.g. Duveen, 2001) have suggested that Tajfel and Turner (1979) have focused on social identity processes and the consequences of social categorization, while minimizing the importance of content. Duveen points out that social identity theory has little to say as to *why* individuals use certain categorizations for themselves. However, Howarth (2002) has provided an explanation of the ways in which aspects of social identity theory and self-categorization theory relate to the concept of social representations (Moscovici, 1984). Howarth suggests that one of Turner et al's (1987) strategies of social change - re-evaluation of the in-group - involves recognition of representations held about the group by others, and that by elaborating, affirming, challenging or resisting these, people re-evaluate representations of their locale and

themselves (2002, p.15). This link between social identity theory and social representations theory highlights the ways in which notions of locale, community and social identity are co-constructed by in-group, or community members, and also 'outsiders'.

1.7. A social representations approach

This study follows a strong research tradition within a social representations approach in Cardiff School of Social Sciences that has focused on participation in education in valley communities within South Wales. While there is much current interest in socially constructed, or 'imagined' communities, this research re-emphasizes relationships between the materiality of culture and participation in education and work practices. Specifically, this study contributes to a relatively small field of research that forges links between social representations and education - examples include Lloyd and Duveen (1990), Ivinson (1998) and Orr, Sagi and Bar-On (2000). The previous section considered different levels of analysis (Doise, 1986) and argued that a theory of social representations integrates these, thus bridging the individual-social divide through a focus upon what Jovchelovitch refers to as 'the space in between communities and individuals' (2007, p.67). This space is a dynamic one, as the meanings created and recognized by people within a locale construct imagined communities, which themselves provide material for sense-making. There is no suggestion here that these communities are 'real'; an imagined community is conceptualized here as a symbolic community. The focus is upon how communities are constructed, and how a particular construction of a community may not be recognized in the same way by all its members. Use of social representations theory is particularly appropriate for a study of engagement with education within specific locales and their communities, as it allows for a contribution to the field through a consideration of how the materiality of a locale over time provides the symbolic material with which groups and individuals make sense and imagine futures.

Moscovici (1998) describes social representations as:

‘....systems of values, ideas and practices with a twofold function: first to establish an order which will enable individuals to orient themselves in their material and social world and to master it; and secondly to enable communication to take place among the members of a community by providing them with a code for social exchange and a code for naming and classifying unambiguously the various aspects of their world and their individual and group history’.

(Moscovici, 1973, p.xiii, quoted in Flick, 1998, p.6)

Social representations are considered to be ‘negotiated constructs of social groups’ (Wagner et al., 1999, p.96), that are required for people to manage symbolically the existence of the unfamiliar (Wagner et al., 2002). They are the ensembles ‘of thoughts and feelings being expressed in verbal and overt behaviour of actors which constitutes an object for a social group’ (Wagner et al, 1999, p.96). Through the exploration of how shared meanings are constructed, maintained and modified, social representations theory allows consideration of how people appropriate meanings, or social representations, that are afforded by their locale in order to make sense of their lives.

Social representations theory addresses ‘how and why people share knowledge and therefore constitute their common reality’ (Moscovici, 1990, p.164), and how they cope symbolically in times of change and uncertainty. One of the fundamental points of Moscovici’s theory is the primacy of social representations, as all evaluations of objects, events and people are regulated by the social representations of that society. In this way, virtually everything a person knows, they will have learnt from others around them, though language, use of objects and stories (Moscovici, 1998), and it is this shared action that is the social origin of ideas and knowledge. Social representations are often used without conscious realisation (Oyserman and Markus, 1998), and they condition habitual culture-specific patterns of thinking and acting (Farr, 1987a). social representations influence interaction and are ‘elaborated and developed in the context of particular projects in which social groups actively engage, collaborate or compete’ (Howarth,

Foster and Dorrer, 2004, p.14). Social representations possess a holistic character - there are no isolated beliefs. Each is inextricably linked to others, and when one representation is invoked a number of others must necessarily be used. Within social representations theory consensual universes are created through objects, events and people being conventionalised by shared understandings, which enable individuals to classify stimuli, making them more comprehensible and available to community members.

Social representations theory acknowledges that individuals are actively using information they receive from their environment - reality is not simply 'out there' (Moscovici, 1984, p.39). As Flick asserts:

'Social representations are not simply *given*, but are produced by individuals in social contexts or groups in a transformative process of interpretation and inscription of meaning'

(1998, p.50, italics original)

A theory of social representations brings together the different planes of analysis - societal, interpersonal and individual - in terms of *meaning*. Forms of meaning are collectively constructed and used, and groups, whether large societies or small local groups, are not viewed as collectives based merely on power and mutual interests, but as clusters of people bound together through the sharing of meanings. Beliefs, opinions and values may differ, but these are nonetheless responses to the acknowledgement of shared meanings. Although social representations travel through a variety of different media, Moscovici emphasises the importance of language to the creation and sharing of social representations. He stresses the way that language endows a subject with substance (Moscovici, 1984). During conversation and co-operation unfamiliar concepts are discussed and made familiar and therefore accessible to the community in a common-sense way. Through interaction, ideas from the reified, scientific universe are anchored in the consensual, created universe, are evaluated according to existing representations and are classified, named and may assume a position in a hierarchical structure. It is through anchoring that community members understand all objects, events and people

(Moscovici, 1984). Once an abstract idea is anchored and has become familiar and 'known' by a community, it becomes a concrete, element of their reality. It becomes real, accepted and stable - objectified. Objectification can be understood as a mechanism by which a social group constructs an image structure through icon or metaphor that reproduces a complex network of ideas (Moscovici, 1984). As Wagner et al (1999) explain:

‘...an objectification captures the essence of a phenomenon, makes it intelligible for people and weaves it into the fabric of the group’s common sense’

(Wagner et al, 1999, p.99)

In this way community members are able to understand, to imagine, their community. Common sense understandings construct a reified community through a shared recognition of symbolic elements available within their locale over time. In order to explore how people are able to engage with education and to imagine themselves forward, it is necessary to understand something of how the two locales and their communities are understood by different age and gender groups. As social representations are produced in social contexts they are constantly being elaborated and transformed through validation and contestation. People within a social group will not necessarily share the entire contents and meanings of a social representation nor will they interpret them in the same ways. Thus competing social representations of a locale and its community will circulate simultaneously, and the content of these depends on the material and psychological needs of individuals and groups.

Even though social representations exist in relation to each other, some are more dominant than others. Hegemonic representations are recognised by all members of a social group without being constructed by them. Emancipated representations are generated through exchange and participation resulting in particular ways of interpreting meanings that no longer belong to a specific group, instead becoming everyday knowledge for those outside that group. For example, experiences of mining below ground have become mixed with the interpretations of mining of those working above

ground to construct mundane knowledge regarding mining. Polemic representations refer to meanings constructed and maintained by distinct social groups, which have become relevant due to social and political conflict (Flick, 1998, p.50). Social representations of mining might have become particularly strong within former mining locales due to the dramatic, and often aggressive, circumstances in which mining was concluded. During times of conflict when people are experiencing uncertainty, concern or tension, there is an increased likelihood that core elements of a strong social representations may be appropriated.

Core and/or periphery elements of social representations (Abric, 1993) may be accepted, extended, resisted or rejected by individuals, groups, communities, cultures and societies. Some aspects of a social representation have deep historical roots and form its core. The core of a social representation provides its meaning, and is most resistant to change. Social representations differ from each other when they possess distinct contents, and it has been asserted that the cores of social representations are organised around antimonies, or oppositions (Markova, 2003, p.179). Periphery elements organised around the core are more flexible and relevant to actual situations. It is these periphery elements that are most likely to transform over time, maintaining the dynamic of the representation, while regulating the amount of change it may undergo. Thus periphery elements play a key role in the historical adaptation of a social representation (Markova, 2003).

Social representations enable individuals to make sense during periods of uncertainty, and at times of traumatic disruption people are more likely to appropriate the dominant social representations and recognize its core elements. Individuals draw upon established, idealized notions to resolve tensions; they engage in this psychic work when they feel the need to defend themselves from some perceived threat of rupture to the fabric of the common sense understandings of members of the community; their objectified 'reality'. Jodelet's (1991) study of the introduction of 'le bredin' to a French community is a powerful example of how people drew upon core elements of powerful and conservative social representations to defend themselves against an 'invasion' by

those released from the insane asylum. Joffe's (1996b) exploration of social representations related to the threat of HIV and AIDS found that people appropriated ethnocentric myths relating to 'otherness' to protect themselves from notions of health risk. In the South Wales valleys, the rupture created by the loss of heavy industry might be expected to create the conditions for the appropriation of powerful historical social representations, the core elements of which support a mythical way of life that has been woven around mining and mining communities.

Individuals can possess diverse forms of knowledge, which may encompass a range of core and periphery elements. Jovechelovitch (2007) has argued that different forms of knowledge can co-exist within the same group or individual, and that people will draw upon a specific form according to their needs within particular social context, resulting in what Moscovici (1961.1976a, in Jovechelovitch, 2007) termed 'cognitive polyphasia', a state whereby 'different kinds of knowledge, possessing different rationalities, live side by side in the same individual' (Jovechelovitch, 2007, p.60). Such a concept is relevant to a study of ex-mining communities in South Wales, where co-existing, often competing social representations and elements of social representations may circulate. An individual's appropriation of these will depend on their psychological needs. Though such appropriation may appear contradictory, it serves to makes sense of different transitional phases and to construct a cohesive account that connects past to present and allows for the imagining of possible futures.

Markova suggests that '[t]he beginning of knowledge or of ideas often starts with distinguishing between things' (1996, p.177). Oppositional thinking has been argued to underlie common sense thinking (Moscovici, 1992, in Markova, 2003), with long-present concepts and meanings shaping the sense making of individuals. Examples might include women/men, education/manual employment and clean/dirty. Antinomies can be transmitted through cultural communication from one generation to another without conscious reflection. However, they become themata, or taxonomies of oppositional nature, when events bring them into focus as a source of tension. Oppositions that were previously taken for granted may become important due to the presence of threat, which

change the boundaries of the antinomies, and these may begin generating social representations as they become themata (Markova, 2003).

Again, Jodelet, Joffe and Jovechelovitch provide strong examples of oppositions. At the heart of Jodelet's work is the opposition of sanity/madness. When thrust into the collective consciousness, this became a thema that generated a network of social representations such as clean/dirty, uncontaminated/contaminated and human/non-human. Joffe's (1996b) exploration of social representations related to the threat of HIV and AIDS, and Jovchelovitch's (2007) study of the effects of political corruption in Brazil also provide examples of how social tension and the resulting need for sense-making creates the climate for the generation of social representations. De-industrialisation in the South Wales valleys could be expected to pose a threat to a recognised way of life, and might thus be expected to heighten social attention upon certain social representations based on particularly relevant themata and antinomies. People could thus be expected to draw upon the myths, the core elements of social representations in order to talk about these transitions.

1.7.1 Gender

Community life positions men and women in specific ways through dominant practices and needs, thus men and women may share social representations, such as 'mythical' elements of mining communities, but may take them up differently. Duveen (1993) points out that while some social identities can be optional, the identity structure of gender is an imperative one. Social representations of gender demand the construction of a complementary social identity (Duveen and Lloyd, 1990). Individuals construct social identities to locate themselves in the collective world, as social marking of the self and others, as well as material culture enables individuals to make sense. If men and women are positioned differently with regard to education and work, though they may share relevant social representations they are likely to appropriate them according to their positioning, resulting in the imagining of different education and work futures.

Gender has been discussed in a number of ways within psychology. Major themes have included body image (e.g. Demerest and Allen, 2000; Grogan, 2007), sexuality (e.g. Baumeister, 2001) and aggression (e.g. Anderson and Bushman, 2002a; Huessmann and Guerra, 1997). Discursive approaches have focused upon issues surrounding male/female relationships and the construction of gendered identities, (e.g. Phoenix and Frosh, 2001; Speer, 2001; Wetherell and Edley, 1999). From a Foucauldian social constructionist perspective, a prime interest has been the power of ‘dominant truths’ inherent in social and cultural discourses to impact upon subjectivities, and much research has been undertaken from a psychoanalytic perspective (e.g. Hollway, 1998; Walkerdine, 1991, 1998; Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2001). Specifically, Walkerdine’s (1998) study of girl’s participation in the subject of maths highlights both the constraining nature of formal education, along with the relationships between material and symbolic elements and identities. Such a psychosocial approach emphasises the ways that people undertake psychic work in order to defend their gendered selves; how men defend what is recognized as masculinity by deflecting outwards, upon women all that is considered feminine. Such deflection as a defence is also a fundamental element of social representations research, including Joffe (1997, 1999) and Jovchelovitch (2002, 2007).

The concept of social representations combines the psychodynamic (e.g. Jodelet, 1991; Joffe, 1997, 1999; Jovechelovitch, 2002) with a focus upon in-group/out-group dynamics ((Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Through the recognition of the ways in which men and women maintain a sense of in-group membership (e.g. Duveen and Lloyd, 1990) it provides an explanation of how men project outward onto women as a defence, to retain a sense of the ‘pure’ masculine – the core of that social representation of masculinity. Both genders recognize such a strong social representation, and men and women draw upon it differently.

Social representations theory has been extended and elaborated, and has remained a contested field. One perspective is Duveen’s (e.g. Duveen and Lloyd, 1986; Duveen, 2001), that social representations precede identities - that individuals are born into a

socially constructed system of representations and that even before this, they are the subject of other people's hopes and expectations within the socially constructed world. Duveen and Lloyd (1986; 1990) have explored the ways in which social gender identities are created in the institution of the school. These set parameters regarding what and where are appropriate for men and women, and constrains men and women's opportunities to engage in particular practices and their abilities to imagine futures within education and work.

In contrast to Duveen's (2001) perspective, Breakwell (2001) sees social identity starting with the individual. From this perspective the centrality of a social identity to a person's overall sense of self not only influences exposure to social representations, but also their acceptance and use (Breakwell, 1993). Breakwell argues that social representations theory has under-emphasised how individual identity mechanisms effect the development of social representations. She stresses the relationship between social representations and personal representations, proposing that while a social representation is created during social interaction and possesses an independent existence, it is expressed through the cognition, emotion and distinctive action of individuals. However, in some accord with Duveen, Breakwell acknowledges that factors influencing development of personal identity are determined by prior social experience and inhibited by identity requirements, thus to some extent they remain constrained by the social.

Gender has been conceptualised as a hegemonic social representation (Connell, 1987), though it is accepted that different forms of hegemonic masculinity exist (e.g. Brandth, and Haugen, 2005; Hale, 2008). This study focuses upon how the materiality of 'the outside', in terms of practices, has contributed to the construction of a particular form of dominant masculinity, a masculinity founded on the mining practices of the past, practices that have constructed exaggerated social representations of masculinity and femininity. The association between social representations and social identities rooted in an industrial past raises the requirement for further consideration of the significance of place.

1.8 Space and Place

The following section considers ways in which 'space' and 'place' have been conceptualized, and explains how for the purposes of this study 'place' is conceptualized through an understanding of history and culture. Social representations theory places emphasis on the historical dimension of ideas; for example, how due to social and economic change different networks of social representations will be circulating during different time periods. Thus the theory is a particularly useful one for the study of major transitions affecting locales and the people living in them. The following section considers issues of 'space and place', and 'place and community' before turning to theories of social identity and social representations to develop a discussion relating to how people find psychological ways to defend against transition and disruption.

A consideration of Massey's (1995) cultural geographical view alongside interpretations of social representations theory adds an additional dimension to notions of place, space and community. Massey's work has at its core a sense of both space and time, moving beyond the mapping of material features and the physicality of 'place' to an understanding of 'space' that includes dimensions of meaning. Massey has argued that places should not be considered to be geographical locations, but as 'constantly shifting articulations of social relations through time' (Baker, 2003, p.221). Continuing technological advancement is supporting relatively instant worldwide economic, political and social communications, which is argued to promote globalized meeting places and communities (Massey, 1995). These dramatic changes can radically disrupt meanings and create tensions for people living in affected locales, with different social groups positioned in distinct ways in relation to related 'flows and interconnections' (Massey, 1991, p.25). From Massey's viewpoint, time-space-compression - the dissolution of boundaries due to globalisation - results in a need to re-think a sense of 'place'. Massey questions the notion that a 'place' must be set at a bounded geographical location, or that a place contains a single community. Thus it is pertinent here to consider how 'space', 'place' and 'community' are conceptualised in accordance with the theoretical stance of this study.

Gieryn (2000) distinguishes between 'space' and 'place' in terms of culture, defining 'space' in terms of "abstract geometries (distance, direction, size, shape, volume)", and 'place' as "space filled up by people, practices, objects and representations" (2000, p.465). From this perspective the features of a place and the interpretations and identifications by its individuals work together in a mutually dependent way, and 'place' is a social construct that can be destroyed if the relationship between location, material form and meaningfulness breaks down (Gieryn, 2000, p.467). In this study, 'place' is initially conceptualised in terms of locale; a unique gathering of people, objects, buildings, practices and social representations. Changes in the topography or material features of a locale, for example the re-landscaping of disused industrial sites or alterations to the structure or use of buildings, can result in a sense of dislocation for inhabitants (Massey, 1991). People need to be able to make sense of their environment, as when in disarray, they become 'spaces' rather than 'places' (Casey, 2001).

A place is lived, experienced and shared, through the homes, schools, workplaces, sports grounds, shopping arcades, leisure centres, recreation areas and so on that exist at a given location. Places are 'thickly-lived', with 'densely enmeshed infrastructures' (Casey, 2001, p.684), and heavily implicated in the construction of place is *practice*. Inhabitants of thickly-lived places orient themselves around their experiences of the presence of local practices - how it feels to be in 'the brute presence of the place' (Casey, 2001, p.688). Places, therefore, are constructed and maintained through the relationship between social representations and practices.

Thickly-lived places become bounded through practices. Such places are nameable, identifiable and layered with meanings constructed from these practices, and they can be globally recognized places precisely because they are bounded. For example, coal from South Wales was renowned throughout the world as a quality product, making the region a contributor to world-wide industry and commerce, bestowing an identity and allowing residents of this place to inhabit and contribute to a globalised world. Contributing to a conceptualisation of place is the distinctiveness of its linkage to the 'outside', which is a part of what constitutes the place (Massey, 1991, p.29).

Social representations theory can contribute a psychological element to the understanding of how places become ‘thickly-lived’, and how people develop social identities and imagine themselves forward. The anchoring and objectification of places, along with objects, events and people collectively constructs social representations that people draw upon to make sense of their locale and of themselves. Thus place provides the social resources through which thinking and meaning-making can take place. As Bell asserts: ‘The stories we tell take place in places’ (1994, p.170); stories and memories are embedded in the material and symbolic forms that constitute the social settings in which people live. Social identities and possible futures are attached to past practices, institutions and relationships. As the locale changes through de-industrialization people attempt to deal with the unfamiliar by reconciling the past with the present. This may require the appropriation of dominant social representations, along with the emergence of cognitive polyphasia (Jovchelovitch, 2007) - the acknowledgement of competing social representations. In accounts of experiences of education and work it would be expected that contradictions will emerge at points at which people attempt to reconcile conflict. Competing social representations circulate through communities over time, and through different groups within communities.

1.9 Place and Community

The following section distinguishes between ‘place’ and ‘community’, and clarifies the conceptualization of ‘community’ that underpins this study. Baker argues that ‘(w)ithout a memory, without a past, a place - just like a person - has no identity’ (2003, p.221), and Massey has concluded that ‘(t)he description, definition and identification of a place is thus always inevitably an intervention not only into geography but also, at least implicitly into the (re)telling of the historical constitution of the present’ (1995, p.190). Because places are both constructed by people, and construct the parameters within which people live their lives, ‘place’ has often been misidentified with ‘community’ (Massey, 1991). However, a place is not the same as a coherent social group; communities exist across

boundaries and places can consist of multiple communities. Thus the concept of 'community' is a contested one, both in terms of who or what comprises a community, and how communities are interpreted, understood and remembered by members and non-members.

Coalfield neighbourhoods have been a major focus for those interested in how 'communities' are lived and remembered. Sociological research has pointed to the mythologizing of the 'homogenous and cohesive' mining community, resulting in the production of an 'imagined community' that has never existed (e.g. Dicks, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004; Dicks and Van Loon, 1999; Roberts, 1999). Indeed, Dicks has provided strong evidence of the unique features of mining locales, arguing that '(n)otions of 'the local community' may turn out to be imaginary constructs rather than empirical realities' (2003, p.33). However, while unique features are recognisable, identifiable social representations within a locale point to the circulation of 'common' or shared ideas, ideas that are influenced by social representations held by others outside the community (Moscovici, 1984), but that may be particularly salient for those people living within a specific locale. These ideas, or social representations come to underpin the beliefs, thoughts and behaviours of those local people, and they can be used as a way of psychologically re-establishing boundaries in order to protect both community and self during and following periods of transition.

While such a view might be interpreted as in tension with a sociological standpoint that questions homogeneity of community, a social representations approach employs a different level of analysis to that of Dicks and colleagues, thus the approaches do not stand in contradiction. The focus for this study is not upon whether or not evidence supports or not a romanticized local identity, but upon the 'symbolic'. The focus is not upon the dynamics of 'real' communities, but upon the dynamics of ideas circulating within them. While the existence of 'coalfield communities' in South Wales is recognized, it is what constituted these that can be contested. For example, Massey has suggested that '[.....] the past of a place is open to a multiplicity of readings in the present' (1995, p.184). Following the demise of coal mining in the South Wales valleys,

the drive to preserve the industrial past has been argued to result in what Massey has described as ‘sentimentalised recovering of sanitised heritages’ (1991, p.24). However, Dicks herself has argued that while local identity and culture can be ‘romanticized’, it is nonetheless a view that is recognised by local people (2003, p.40). Thus the image of the closely-knit, hard-working, happy and supportive coalfield community might well be an ‘imagined community’, but to many it is recognised, shared and ‘real’, as particular elements of colliery communities come to be recognised as the fundamental core of the locale. From the theoretical standpoint of this study, the term ‘imagined community’ has a specific interpretation. An ‘imagined community’ is one that has been constructed through the acknowledgement of key shared experiences and memories, many of which can become almost iconic, once the practices that underpinned them are lost.

Crow and Allan (1994) have pointed out that boundaries relating to a sense of community and boundaries of place do not often coincide accurately. However communities formed around dominant practices relating to the local geology may identify themselves in terms of both community and place. The practices undertaken by communities guide the erection of buildings, the development of transport systems, the construction of institutions, the production of tools, the generation of behaviours, the embodiment of roles and the formation of relationships. Practices develop the dynamic relationship between both place and community. When social representations are no longer lived and experienced, places become ‘thinned-out’ (Casey, 2001, p.684); they lose layers of meaning that were once enlivened through practice. Just as the dissolution of geographical boundaries promotes a defensive response (Massey, 1991), so the dissolution of *symbolic* boundaries can result in the need to protect the ‘familiar’ in order to maintain a coherent sense of self. When a major transition is at the level of the locale, as it has been in the coalfields, both community and self-identity can be threatened. This sense of threat can promote the re-construction of demarcated groups within the community of the locale, and between ‘the locale’ and ‘the outside’.

1.10 Social Psychology and Community

The following consideration of social psychological views of community revisits discursive approaches, along with social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) and social categorization theory (Turner, 1984), as these approaches all consider the dynamic nature of the collective. Subsequent to this section, will be a discussion of the ways in which social representations theory can extend social psychological explanations of community.

A number of approaches within social psychology have considered the dynamics of community and inter-group relations. From a discursive approach, collective identities are important to the formation of a person's sense of self (e.g. Hopkins, Kahani-Hopkins and Reicher, 2006). However the emphasis that much social psychology places upon the individualistic is argued to obscure 'the collective nature of the relations between persons, identities and material settings' (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000, p.29), and the tendency of some social psychology researchers to largely neglect the 'locatedness' of social life has been identified (e.g. Dixon, 2001; Hopkins and Dixon, 2006). The discursive tradition attempts to reintroduce a sense of community by relocating identity within the social through the prioritizing of human dialogue, which suggests that it is through language that places, and thus communities are constructed. It has been recognised that there is a need to explore the interrelatedness of persons and environment in terms of material features of the shared environment as well as the history of a place (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000). This entails an acknowledgement of 'a social space as a meaningful and dynamic production that constitutes our collective relations and identities' (Dixon, 2001, p.587). Thus in explorations of experiences within community life there is a need to consider a less conventional notion of textuality in order to recognize the importance of embodied experience to a sense of place-identity. Dixon and Durrheim (2000) conclude that '[t]here is clearly a need to develop analytic tools that can address the geographic dimension of social life more directly' (2000, p.41).

In order to further consider the importance of collective processes, a number of researchers have drawn from Tajfel and Turner. Within social psychology, Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity/social comparison theory recognizes the heterogeneity of places, that different groups within a locale will have different social identities. The theory has focused on the implications of collective identity, asserting that individuals achieve and maintain a positive sense of self through categorizing themselves as members of groups (in-groups) that they can compare favourably to other groups (out-groups) with regard to relevant attributes. For Tajfel and Turner, groups are made up of individuals who see themselves as members of the same category (e.g. miners, or those living in a mining community), who share a level of emotional involvement in their definition of themselves, and who share a level of agreement regarding the evaluation of their group. This suggests that group identity ('we') forms a powerful component of self-identity ('I'). Tajfel and Turner have stressed that key aspects of in-group favouritism include the extent to which an individual has internalised a group membership as part of their self-concept, and the extent to which the social context promotes comparison between groups. Thus it would follow that the more favourably a group can be compared to others the more an individual might invest in that group in order to sustain a positive sense of self.

Mining has provided a discrete category that its members have been able to evaluate favourably in relation to other locally available fields of manual employment. Specifically, coal mining has generated both a product valued across the globe and a relatively high income for local mineworkers. The loss of this lifestyle has caused the people living in coalfield communities to undergo major social and personal transition. According to social identity theory, when the value of a group is diminished, members strive to join more positively distinct groups and/or make their existing group more positively distinct. With the loss of the coal industry in South Wales, there has been an absence of the means by which many ex-miners, particularly older men, and their families could easily transfer membership to other groups they see as equally valued. Thus social identity theory would suggest that particularly positive aspects of 'the mining

community', such as its values and practices, have been emphasised, or mythologized, in order to protect both group and self-identity.

As an extension of social identity theory, Turner's social categorization theory (1984) focuses upon the distinction between personal and social identity to address aspects of group behaviour. The theory posits that people self-categorize themselves in terms of salient social classifications. Presented as 'a dynamic, context-dependent process, determined by comparative relations within a given context' (Turner, 1999), it suggests that when circumstances result in social identity becoming relatively more salient than personal identity, individuals will tend to view themselves as conventional group members.

However, while social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) emphasises the variety of group identities that exist within communities and social-categorization theory (Turner, 1984) focuses strongly on the salience of social context, for this study an approach is required that can reintroduce both the geographical and the temporal. Such an approach needs to consider how life within a locale is remembered, in order to explore how imagined communities are constructed and how they become reified.

1.11 Social Representations and Community

A theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) extends social identity theory in that it further examines the ways in which group membership is crucial to the sense-making of individuals. The main functions of social representations are the reduction of uncertainty by making the strange familiar, and the reduction of communication difficulties within a given group (Moscovici, 1984). While shared social representations come to underpin beliefs, thinking and behaviours, group or community members may not necessarily be 'consciously aware of the representation or of its motivating forces' (Joffe, 1999, p.99). The processes involved in building representations of events ensure that central values and customs of the community are imprinted onto new events, and

also guide changes in common sense thinking over time (Joffe, 2003, p.63). Thus social representations theory provides a 'highly specific and appropriate way of conceptualising the processes which drive 'mythical thinking'' (Joffe, 1997, p.134).

Moscovici proposes that the emergence of social representations is a response to a threat to the collective identity of the group, and that a fundamental purpose of representation is to defend against threat (Joffe, 1999, p.100). Joffe's (1996a) psychodynamic approach proposes that early patterns of thinking based on circulating social representations allow people to manage the psychic or emotional tensions created by threatening events. These powerfully shape the ways in which further events are represented. It has been argued that threatening events or concepts become anchored in terms of 'the other', in terms of threat from 'the outside' (Joffe, 2003). In this study examples might include the decision by national government to close the coalfields of South Wales and also evaluations of local young people by a national 'school system'.

Economic and social transitions can imbue places with new meanings that impact deeply upon many of the people living in affected locales. The focus of this study is upon the relationships people have had, and have with education within their home locale.

Following dramatic transitions, such as de-industrialisation, specific social representations of education, such as those relating to definitions of learning and the 'right' of particular people, or groups of people to engage with learning and to 'know' (Lave, 2008) can be subject to change. This project maintains a strong psychological emphasis of 'meaning', by exploring how different generations of residents might work out tensions resulting from change in disparate ways according to social marking - what is psychologically salient for men and women of different ages. How are meanings constructed and used by people of different generations? How are people of different ages able to maintain or modify social representations in order to maintain a sense of coherence following transition?

Howarth asserts that 'community' is 'a social creation that has acquired reality' (2001, p.1), and that social representations constitute the daily practices underpinning reality

(Howarth, 2006, p.17). Such a conceptualisation suggests that it is the dynamic interaction of 'representations, practices and relations of power' that 'both construct and restrict the social formation of communities' (2001, p.4). Within a social representations theoretical approach, communities represent the past in their collective memories (Duveen, 2007), and it is recognised that particularly dominant institutions and groups can be powerful constructors of meanings and re-presenters of 'reality'. The locale and its community offers symbolic material with which people are able to make sense, and although meanings are continually re-negotiated, core meanings can prevail resulting in the reification of specific 'worlds' through beliefs, discourses and practices.

When specific dominant practices relating to key groups/communities have underpinned life in a locale for some time, the identity of both place and community can become shaped by these, and can be recognized by people both inside and outside the locale. This could be particularly the case when that reality is valued and supported by larger and more powerful institutions, such as national industry and national government. However, reality is often contested, with the reified community resisted by some as an 'imagined' community. People become entrenched within communities that are significant to them (Howarth, 2001), and their sense of a place and their lives within it depends upon the communities to which he or she belongs, has belonged, or has particular knowledge of.

Reification of specific ways of understanding constructs, maintains and transforms the culture of communities and locales over time. This study explores the form through which culture is communicated; how individuals recognize and draw upon particular social representations, or elements of social representations to make sense. As Duveen has pointed out:

'Whatever we take to be connoted by the term culture only becomes accessible through the observation and analysis of specific representations'

(Duveen, 2007, p.544)

The theoretical standpoint of this study suggests that hegemonic social representations circulate within communities and that distinct groups within a community, such as those based on practice, age or gender, may appropriate these differently. Thus, while a dominant image of a community may circulate, different meanings of the same community can co-exist within a single locale or social setting. For example, ex-coal miners, professional men and women, young people, housewives, people from large or small families, students and the unemployed may make sense of their locale, its population and its smaller communities, its practices, and the opportunities and futures it provides very differently. In this study, 'place' is also recognised as 'the school', 'the mine', 'the home' etc. These 'places' are smaller, but well-defined settings, constructed by, and constructing distinct communities within a locale that share specific values, practices and roles that may or may not be recognised or accepted by the wider community. As Joffe (1997) has shown with her study of social representations of AIDS, groups of individuals may be dissimilar in many ways, but common dynamics emerge in the ways in which people think, how they make sense of their lives.

At times of transition a particularly strong social representation that is shared by the collective may emerge as people appropriate this to make sense of change. This does not mean that all groups within a locale will use it in the same way, but that it is recognized by those groups for whom it has a functional use (e.g. Moscovici, 1984). Due to material and symbolic changes over time, people will draw upon social representations to maintain and protect psychological stability.

1.12 Psychological boundaries

While physical boundaries are no longer the constraints they once were, the psychological salience of previously acknowledged boundaries is crucial to the maintenance of an inner landscape. People might well acknowledge physical boundary changes, and even accept them for the function they are meant to serve, while retaining a personally meaningful inner landscape that preserves older boundaries in order to maintain a sense of coherence during periods of transition. An inner landscape is

conceptualised here as a fluid and dynamic resource; the features of a physical locale that have been endowed with personal meaning and that can be drawn upon to understand and manage life events. It is not a fixed mental map. Features are sometimes available to be consciously used, and sometimes unavailable, while existing in the subconscious, and it is not only what can be articulated, but also the meanings and feelings that are not explicitly expressed that are a focus of this project. These have a powerful influence on the negotiation of social identity, which is both constructed by, and influences the ability to project possible futures.

However, the maintenance of an identity can result in constraint (Duveen, 2001), and the preservation of meanings can prevent adaptive action in the face of extreme environmental and social change. Again, it can be argued that the need of many people residing in ex-mining communities to maintain some semblance of their former social identities has prevented them from fully adapting to their changing physical and social environment. A question is how do some people overcome such monumental change to re-direct their lives, while others are unable to relinquish the past, and their place within it? It is participation in situated practice that makes certain features of a place salient; that 'manages' the inner landscape, and Massey's (1995) emphasis of social networks meeting at particular locations suggests that different geographical areas offer different patterns of networks. It is these specific networks of relationships - with others and with the environment - that are the focus of this study; specifically, how people protect their networks during and following times of major social change in order to defend their sense of themselves.

However, while Massey's focus upon place prioritises people's use of space, it under-emphasises the psychological, resulting in underdeveloped notions regarding the opportunities for identity work provided by different geographical and social spaces; specifically how physical spaces determine through common practices the hierarchies of identity that are available, and how these hierarchies can be altered by events in the social world. Brandth and Haugen's (2005) example of the different forms of embodied masculinity constructed in different physical and social spaces provides a powerful

example. While Brandth and Haugen focus upon rural versus urban space, they nonetheless connect notions of space and place with embodiment, as geographical and social spaces are linked to the embodied practices, situated within a field of activity, that form the basis of human subjectivity (e.g. Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Ilyenkov, 1977, both in Burkitt, 1999). Indeed, Leontyev, 1981, in Burkitt, 1999) argued that actions themselves often make sense only within the context of shared work activity, while Holland and Lave (2001) propose that participants in group endeavours become identified by their activities and often identify themselves as ‘owners’ of the practices. Thus the importance of space and place, in terms of locales and their related practices are crucial to gaining an insight into how people make sense of themselves, and defend both their worlds and their own identities. It is necessary then to consider not only ‘place’ and the body within particular social spaces, but also the psychological within the body - embodied experience, embodied knowledge and embodied expression of self.

1.13 Symbolic resources - personal use of social representations

Massey’s approach has led to her questioning of claims that globalisation makes people defensive about the locale in which they reside, and from a sociological perspective her criticisms are valid. It cannot be assumed that landscape and boundary changes generally make people defensive. However, from a psychological viewpoint the defensiveness of individuals can be recognised and it is by considering psychological aspects that the ways in which people defend their social identities can be explored. Changing the plane of analysis from the broader social plane to the individual plane enables the exploration of people’s need for stability, for a core world to remain close to or escape from. Whether the transformation is welcomed or dreaded, social change will impact upon the individuals living in that community, and when people experience major changes in their psychical worlds, they need to maintain some sense of coherence and continuity regarding their identities. This is why a social representations approach can work effectively alongside cultural geography; social representations theory helps to explain how communities deal with the unfamiliarity, uncertainty and anxiety that can result from

wider social change, through an explanation of how meanings are constructed maintained and modified over time.

However, the focus of this study is the ways in which individuals take up and use social representations in very *personal* ways in order to construct a coherent account of their education, training and work experiences. Stemming from social representations theory is the notion of 'symbolic resources' (Zittoun et al., 2003), a conceptual development that retains the tenets of social representations theory, but shifts the theoretical focus away from the construction, maintenance and modification of social representations. The notion of symbolic resources provides a way "...to conceive the relationship between the social and the individual, the trans-actions between what we call 'social' or 'shared' and what we call 'interior'" (Bertau, 2007, p.341). This development focuses the analysis on the ways that individuals take up and put to personal use specific social representations rather than others afforded by their social location to understand events and navigate transitional phases.

In terms of social representations theory (Moscovici, 1984) symbolic resources are captured within a historical context, and remain imbued with meanings collected from the past - Crang (1998) refers to the 'time-thickening' of places, with each generation layering their own contemporary values over landscapes already saturated with meanings endowed by earlier generations. Both Wenger's community of practice and Ilyenkov's notion of the relationship between body, environment and meaning can be interpreted as supporting Zittoun et al.'s (2001) concept of symbolic resources. Historical legacies are carried through the objects, people and practices of locales, and people draw upon enduring ideas to construct meaning and coherence in their lives. Of primary importance to this study are the ways in which people appropriate and use particular affordances for specific purposes. Zittoun et al. identify social locations as 'symbolic streams', in which the person is embedded (2003, p.416), and explain that even when a particular meaning is itself embedded in a socially shared symbolic system, individuals need to make them psychologically active, to appropriate that meaning for themselves. In doing this they call upon a particular feature of the local culture and endow it with personal meaning,

constructing a symbolic resource that they can incorporate within their unique symbolic system and use in a personal way to navigate social life. Zittoun's (2006) notion of 'spheres of experience' emphasises how the social world constrains both the range of affordances that people have available to them and how people are able to interpret and use them. Zittoun's introduction of the 'semiotic prism' extends classical 'triangular' models of meaning making (person, object and other), by conceptualising the prism with its four points - person, semiotic mediation, others and meanings for others, and the meaning of the semiotic object for the person.

Symbolic resources can serve to support or re-construct a sense of coherence in the face of both expected and unexpected breaches in social circumstance. People appropriate particular affordances to make the meanings they need to construct a sense of coherence to their lives. People appropriate symbolic resources in order to recognize and be recognized by others. Some become fundamental to the construction, recognition and maintenance of a particular sense of identity. During transitions identities are either maintained or modified and when transitions involve personal change within a relatively stable social context a person's locale can continue to provide affordances on which a person can rely. Embedded meanings are shared and enduring, supporting coherent trajectories and imagined futures. However, the contribution of places to identity is continually changing, as the meaning of places is constantly re-negotiated (Breakwell, 1996, cited in Twigger-Ross et al., 2003), and when the rupture involves major change in the locale itself, the familiar landscape and traditional practices of a locale, along with conventional ways of understanding day-to-day life - longstanding social representations - can be removed. This sweeps away the support that previously sustained the meaning making of individuals; the meaning making that underpinned their recognized and expected life trajectories. At such times identities can face considerable threat; indeed those strong identities previously supported by long-standing social representations based on the local landscape and traditional practices can be those most severely damaged by drastic change. The dramatic and relatively rapid decline of the coal industry in the South Wales valleys created a massively disorientating rupture for many local people as it removed the foundations that had supported long-standing, strongly embedded

masculine and feminine identities, forcing local people to re-negotiate both their own sense of identity and that of the locale itself in order to imagine an alternative future.

In order to negotiate a trajectory people need to appropriate affordances with which they can recover a sense of coherence to re-align their lives. In doing this individuals undertake considerable psychological work. They locate and make symbolically active specific cultural resources available within the locale. However, people do not merely find symbolic resources either available or unavailable; symbolic resources interact within networks, and changes within local networks, or locales, can radically alter the ways in which even familiar symbolic resources are used. Mass redundancies cause massive changes to the availability of external symbolic resources, such as specific guidance from others, or symbolic elements including material objects and relatively stable patterns of behaving (Zittoun et al., 2003); many of the material objects representing daily life in a mining community have disappeared, while many social practices have altered beyond recognition. These losses powerfully affect how people are able to use internal symbolic resources, such as personal experience, skills and abilities to project a positive trajectory.

While physical strength or skills remain salient symbolic resources, without the support structure provided by local industry, these might no longer serve to maintain a positive sense of self, or to sustain a coherent trajectory, and people have to invest complex psychological effort to locate and use the symbolic resources with which they can re-negotiate a coherent sense of identity and trajectory. Ex-coal miners have had to seek their livelihoods within a new physical and social world in which their most salient internal symbolic resources - their experience and abilities - have been stripped of relevance and status. 'Mining' identities, built upon an early rejection of formal schooling are currently further threatened by a neo-liberal discourse that presents education and training qualifications, rather than hard physical labour as the route to career opportunity, and replaces the power of 'the collective' with a system that places the responsibility for remaining employable, through re-skilling, on the shoulders of the individual. Traditional female identities, formed around the needs and identities of

miners living in their homes (fathers, husbands, sons, lodgers) have also faced rupture, with both external and internal symbolic resources implicated. Traditions relating to domestic and paid work have altered, leading to a re-valuing of skills, and altering both understandings and experience of work and learning in former mining locales.

These changes to the traditional and the familiar have created immense ruptures in the fabric of many people's lives. While some people find newly provided features of the local culture to be compatible with their personal symbolic system, enabling them to smoothly negotiate the transition and continue to imagine possible futures, others may be drastically affected by the eradication of familiar architecture, practices, and networks of communication. The construction and maintenance of a sense of identity is not simply a matter of internalising the external (Moscovici, 1984; Breakwell, 2001; Duveen, 2001), so how do people who find themselves unable to align themselves within an alien symbolic structure protect their sense of identity while imagining possible education and work futures? This project offers a very different conceptualisation of resistance to that of Marx's revolutionary approach, or Willis's (1977) resistance through membership of subcultures; its focus upon people's employment of psychic defences to maintain a coherent sense of self merges the psychological and the social in a way that Marx and Willis do not.

Social representations theory (e.g. Breakwell, 2001; Duveen, 2001) allows for consideration of the possibility for variable representations and resistance, while the notion of symbolic resources (Zittoun et al., 2003) provides a way to explore how people psychically defend their sense of identity through personal appropriation of the affordances available within their locale. In the face of an unfamiliar present and an uncertain future, people actively select and use distinct symbolic material relating to education, training and work in particular ways to resist threats to identity. What is used, how it is used and what is missing or kept out prevents the loss of a sense of coherence during transitions, preserving the ability to imagine a future. A concept that supports the influence of space in people's use of symbolic resources to resist threats to a coherent narrative is Breakwell's (in Twigger-Ross et al., 2003) notion of 'nesting' to explain how

people use geographical locations to define themselves and protect their sense of identity. When a location or locale fails to sustain a positive sense of self, a person may turn to smaller or larger geographical units to serve this purpose. From a symbolic resources perspective, this notion reflects the importance of both the locale itself and settings within the locale to people's differential appropriation of symbolic resources at times of transition; which features of their locale they appropriate and which they do not. It also raises the issue of how different generations might be able to appropriate very different symbolic resources from the locale (or from outside the locale in an increasingly globalised world) in order to imagine an education and work future.

A focus on generational differences also strongly implicates time. Some of the structures, locations and related patterns of behaviour and communication that were most salient for older generations may no longer be available for younger people to use as symbolic resources. Older residents, however, will have a shared past from which to appropriate those symbolic resources that sustain for them a level of continuity. They can draw upon the affordances of the past, if those of the present hold little meaning for them, to symbolically rebuild the landscape and their lost social world in order to recover a sense of their lost identities. Jodelet's (1991) identification of the ways in which villagers appropriated ancient social representations of mental illness to explain and justify their behaviour towards the mentally ill living amongst them provides a powerful example of how people can, and do actively select and use symbolic features of their local culture in order to make sense of the unfamiliar.

The preceding sections have drawn together the major concepts underpinning this study. This thesis has as its primary focus the ways in which people are able to make sense of and engage with education. It contributes to the relevant literature a focus upon the materiality of social representations, those systems of 'values, ideas and practices' circulating within a community or social context (Moscovici, 1973, p.xiii, quoted in Flick, 1998, p.6). It emphasises how embodied and material aspects of the environment impact upon how groups and individuals construct social identities, and how they are able to project futures for themselves within education and work. The notion of symbolic

resources addresses issues relating to cognitive polyphasia; how individuals take up and use specific social representations rather than others afforded by their social location to understand events and navigate transitional phases. A consideration of symbolic resources also focuses strongly upon personal agency in the face of social and economic transitions experienced by communities living in ex-mining locales.

The notion of community allows for an understanding of the ways in which people living within a locale may recognise specific social representations rather than others, and how some individuals or sub-communities may share an understanding of certain elements of a social representation through their collective relationship with particular practices. These practices may provide powerful material and symbolic means with which people are able to make sense, and to construct and maintain recognised identities. Changes in practices within communities may impact strongly upon the identities of individuals, sub-communities, and the wider community itself. The dramatic transitions affecting mining locales in South Wales have resulted in massive changes in the material and symbolic landscape. They have altered the symbolic streams in which individuals were positioned (Zittoun et al, 2003), which has resulted in dislocation and a need for people to relocate themselves (Duveen, 2001). This may have a striking effect on the ways that people use social representations in their accounts of their experiences of education and work.

The focus on preservation of identity through the appropriation of social representations as symbolic resources allows an emphasis on the ways men and women of different generations living in post-industrial communities accept, modify or resist elements of social representations in order to defend their social identities. Specifically, the emphasis of this study is upon how people use social representations to construct a narrative regarding their relationships with education and work. Although power relations are inherent within these institutions, the focus here is upon subjectivities, upon people's accounts of change. This focus leads to the fundamental questions underpinning this study. How do men and women of different generations living in post-industrial communities use symbolic resources to make sense of the unfamiliar in order to construct narrative accounts? How are they using symbolic resources to speak about their

engagement with the education, training and work opportunities afforded by their locale?

How are men and women able to construct and maintain a coherent narrative regarding their education and work trajectories?

1.14 Research aims

- To investigate the ways in which South Wales' valley communities provide the symbolic material with which people are able to make sense of, and engage with education.
- To investigate generational differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work experience in South Wales valley communities.
- To investigate gender differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work in South Wales valley communities.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Research Questions

- To investigate the ways in which South Wales' valley communities provide the symbolic material with which people are able to make sense of, and engage with education.
- To investigate generational differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work experience in South Wales valley communities.
- To investigate gender differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work in South Wales valley communities.

The research questions guiding this study centre on locales as producers of social representations, setting parameters within which people are able to appropriate particular social representations of education. Recent work within social representations theory (Zittoun, 2006) has focused strongly on objects, music and written texts as carriers of social representations. However, this study moves beyond this approach to include the built and natural physical environment and the changes that take place over time due to man-made interventions and 'natural' disasters radically altering the availability of social representations.

What is the relationship between the social representations afforded by the locale and different appropriation of social representations of learning by community members? What generational differences are there in the use of symbolic resources to construct an account of education and work experience? What gender differences are there in the use of symbolic resources to construct an account of education and work experience?

These questions require the description of the locales to gain a sense of the material and symbolic culture with which people make sense of their lives, and how social representations create dominant narratives in locales about who people are and what is valued; how the social representation of the locale influences the ways people are able to think about education and work. The second and third questions also relate to how people make use of social representations based on material and symbolic culture as they construct retrospective accounts of their education and work trajectories.

2.1.2 Research Design: Investigating social representations of a locale

Specifically, the study is attempting to capture the dominant social representations of education and work that circulate within two specific locales, and to explore how these have changed over time within the locales. To this end, a sub-sample of men and women from three generations were selected and interviewed, as these three age groups not only experienced different types of education provision, but also different life opportunities, material and symbolic culture and shifts in the landscapes due to change in the industrial base in South Wales.

2.1.2.1 Methodological issues

This study focuses on social representations of locale. In effect this became the object of the study and the aim was to capture social representations of two locales from the perspective of three different age groups. This required the study to use a number of different strategies, in order to capture how these affected the ways that people were able to make sense of education and work.

Firstly there was a need to ‘map’ the social representations as they are embedded in the locale; the material culture and the landscape. Thus to capture social representations held within these different features a single strategy utilising one method was not sufficient. Moscovici’s (1982) contention is that to capture social representations requires a ‘methodological polytheism’, and the appropriate

combining of methods providing data from multiple sources has been shown to be extremely effective in studies of social representations (e.g. Herzlich, 1973; Ivinson, 1998; Jodelet, 1991).

The second requirement of the study was to capture social representations of education from the perspective of community members, and this was achieved through the eliciting of personal accounts in two different types of interview, photo-elicitation and unstructured interviews. In effect people were asked to offer their meanings of education, training and work, and to provide an account of how they have constructed a sense of coherence by appropriating the affordances of the locale.

2.1.3 Selection of methodologies

No simple methodology can be adopted to undertake an investigation that requires multiple lenses. Thus diverse methods must be used in order to adequately map the materiality of the locales, identify the social representations circulating within these locales, and explore people's personal appropriation of these as symbolic resources. Ideally in order to address the two aforementioned methodological tasks (task 1 – mapping the social representations, task 2 – eliciting the accounts), an in-depth ethnographical study of a community such as that performed by Jodelet (1991) would be undertaken. Jodelet's (1991) use of a complex ethnographical approach of social representations captured the social representations of madness that were circulating in the study community to investigate the historical legacies of the locale. Jodelet's study employed multiple methods and had at its centre a time of great transition for the community, addressing issues of rupture and how people cope in the aftermath of radical change, namely the opening of the asylum doors to allow the mentally ill to live among the villagers. Jodelet traced the circulation of social representations of madness through what the community members said, through the spatiality of the homes in the locale, and through objects and artefacts, such as cutlery, clothing and tools.

For a number of reasons the opportunity to follow this model would have been ideal. However, for pragmatic reasons a design of this complexity and length was not possible. Therefore the ethnography was undertaken through a mobile methods approach. This allowed for a customised approach with a specific focus upon the visual, and the power of the physical landscape. The focus here was upon social representations of locale and how these affect peoples' abilities to think about education and work in two distinct locales and, although within pragmatic parameters the study does employ a range of methods, the emphasis was upon the physical environment and how features of the environment are related to changes in social representations.

It is important to acknowledge, however, that there can be no certainty that the social representations identified in chapter 4 are a full range of social representations related to a specific locale. They are the result of an analysis of the participant's accounts, thus it is recognised that these particular social representations could relate to the very specific sample recruited. As this was a non-representative sample, no claims are made that these interpretations can be generalised to the wider population (Willig, 2008). A primary aim of the study was to identify similarities and differences in the ways in which groups within a locale recognise social representations according to their age and gender when they are constructing an account. Commonalities within the interviews of the participants in each age and gender cohort were recognized and served to identify how participants entering their locales at different temporal points made sense of education and work. Thus this research has referential adequacy (Eisner, 2003, p.26) in that it provides a psychological explanation of how people are able to make sense of their worlds through their appropriation of material and symbolic elements provided by their locales.

Ideally, a wider cross-section of the population would have been recruited for this research. However, due to pragmatic considerations, the sample numbers were limited. The social representations presented in this thesis as circulating in the two locales may not be claimed to be an exhaustive inventory. However, the use of two different methods of data collection provides structural corroboration (Eisner, 2003, p.26), in that age and gender similarities and differences regarding

dominant social representations emerged in interviews resulting from both the photo-elicitation and unstructured interview methods. This is a particular strength of the study, as people with different educational and work trajectories recognised specific social representations identified as circulating in their locale, and it was possible to identify the different ways in which these were used during the interviews. One example is the social representation of a powerful and united force of miners. Although the image that emerged of a past mining community could be argued to be overly simplified and stereotypic, such a social representation was recognised by the two ex-mine workers, a larger number of men who had forged academic or professional careers, and many of the women living in the locale.

Social representations travel through a variety of different media, and specific South Wales valleys communities possess particularly striking features. Many are more enclosed than other communities due to the remarkable geographical characteristics of the area and the resulting higher level of difficulty in travelling to surrounding towns and cities. Many were located on coalfields. The physical space that people reside within must be considered when investigating how social representations are produced locally. While the notions of 'space' (physical features) and 'place' (meanings) are inextricably connected (Agnew, 2005, p.82), for the purposes of this study a description of certain physical characteristics of the locales (the space) is necessary in order to later identify those that carry the dominant social representations for people and make the locale a 'place'. This necessitates a temporary separation of the two concepts, as 'place' is located within the realm of phenomenology (Agnew, 2005) and is addressed by the second methodological task, the eliciting of accounts.

The novel aspect of this study is that in order to investigate personal experiences of life in specific locales, the external is not diminished, as traditional phenomenology would advocate, but acknowledged, allowing the relationships between personal meanings and material culture to be recognized through the identification of social representations. The analysis re-connects the two conceptual approaches in a way that other approaches do not.

For example, while the careful mapping out of features of communities has long been the domain of community studies (Lynd and Lynd, 1929; Stacey, 1960; Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel, 1972; Stacey et al., 1975), in general the discipline fails to address the personal meanings that material culture is endowed with. Often relying heavily on surveys, participant observation and sustained conversation with community members, personal meanings related to material culture have generally been minimised. However, the strength of comparative studies (Hakim, 2000), such as Taub et al.'s (1984) comparison of crime in different Chicago neighbourhoods underscores the importance of using two locales in order to make the familiar unfamiliar and identify that which is particular to a specific locale. In contrast to community studies, this study employs methods intended to capture a sense of the culture of the locales through the social ground, in order to re-present something of that culture to community members; the interviews actually re-present physical features as carriers of social and personal meanings.

The study was designed to employ mobile methods throughout, an approach that results in the integration of many aspects. It is becoming increasingly accepted, particularly within cultural geography and interdisciplinary research to employ 'mobile methods' i.e. walking and talking within the locale under study, for purposes such as mapping social networks (e.g. Clark et al., 2008) or gaining a richer understanding of the locale and providing stimulus prompts during interviews (e.g.; Hall, Coffey and Lashua, 2008). Walking a locale combines the identification of key features, the location of institutions in which to seek information, the initial tentative emergence of social representations, the design of the instruments, the recruitment of participants, and the conducting of the interviews. Non-participant observation through mobile methods contributes by allowing a focus on the visual that provides a strong picture of the physicality of a locale, such as education institutions, industries, housing, shopping amenities, leisure opportunities and transport and parking facilities. Although fieldwork is guided by pre-determined research questions, in practice mobile methods allow studies to evolve through the spontaneous input of different community members, retaining the visual aspects of 'space' and 'place' as the primary foci.

In order to provide an adequate description of the features of each locale, it was necessary to become immersed in the local culture, become familiar with particularly key characteristics. The ethnographic work involved walking around the locale, looking at and listening to the community. At this stage the work privileged the physical environment in order to capture an edited version of the locale through particular visual images. Pragmatic decisions were needed as only a certain amount of images could be included in the limited selection of pictures to accompany the questions that would comprise data collection instrument number 1.

A second source of insight into the locale was to return with the instrument and represent a segment of the community to local people (to be discussed in more detail in the methods section). Here the physical environment was again powerfully in focus, while personal accounts revealing social representations of education were obtained. However, through sensitive questioning 'place' could begin to emerge from 'space', with a phenomenological approach uniting personal meanings with the physical features of the locale. Instrument number 2, the unstructured interview (again to be discussed in more detail in the method section), allowed for the substantiation of the social representations identified within the photo-elicitation accounts. By asking people to talk of their experiences of education and work, with no use of prompts, hegemonic social representations appropriated by the interviewees could be compared to those appropriated during the photo-elicitation interviews.

This underscores the importance of methodological polytheism to a study of social representations, and provides a strong argument for the use of multiple methods that connect the phenomenological to material culture, rather than an approach that under-emphasises this relationship. Discourse analysis places the construction of meaning firmly within the discourse setting, and while accentuating the dynamic nature of meaning construction, a discourse analytic approach is not adequate for addressing the phenomenon of social representations. A focus on discourse alone fails to acknowledge that social representations circulate through both the symbolic and the material, a physicality that permeates the valleys communities of South Wales. A focus on the physical landscape and

of a locale and its material features places the emphasis on the social to an extent that discourse analysis does not, by identifying relationships between the material and visual, the communication of meanings, and the ways that these are used to maintain a sense of coherence.

2.1.4 Comparing locales

The two co-ordinates of an ethnographic study are time and space, and the use of 'mapping' and the inclusion of different generations of community members address these concepts within pragmatic parameters. However, a particularly important issue resulting from the ethnographic element of the methodology - that of immersion into the culture of the study locale - was the need to make the familiar unfamiliar. It was necessary to be able to identify the particular and the unusual after one had become accustomed to it. To this end an additional locale was used for comparison, a locale that was initially equally unfamiliar to the researcher, but that shared some features with the primary locale, while being different in other aspects.

The study of two locales was a further pragmatic decision; initially three locales were considered, but the depth of the study in conjunction with time restrictions precluded investigation of a third. The second locale (Ynysawdre) serves primarily to aid the identification of distinctive aspects of the main locale (Abertillery), and has not itself been investigated to the same depth as the first. The 'mapping' of Abertillery guided the subsequent 'mapping' of Ynysawdre to establish major differences; to determine what physical features and social representations were salient in Abertillery, and later by identifying differences in the availability and appropriation of social representations alongside differences in material culture. One example of the benefits of a comparison was the identification of how community members remember, prioritise and relate to previous local sources of employment in their accounts, even when they themselves had never participated, and how the loss of such employment has affected their own abilities to project education and employment futures.

2.1.5 Comparing across time

This example also illustrates the crucial importance of investigating transitions across time. For those residing in Jodelet's (1991) study village, the key transition was the opening of the asylum doors, while for those living in Abertillery it was the closing of the colliery gates. The study focuses on the collapse of the industrial base as the central transition point for the Abertillery community. It is expected that such a dramatic rupture resulting in widespread transformations within the community will change the relationship between the institutions of education and the institutions of production, and a key question is whether, as the industrial base collapsed, people turned back to education to find new ways to make sense; to navigate the rupture and maintain coherence.

2.1.5.1 Capturing social representations of 'locale'

The use of multiple methods leads the study into both the communal and the subjective, addressing both the dominant social representations of a locale and how this relates to how people engage with education and work. The basis for this study is the relationship between material culture and subjective accounts of education and work experiences and a key aim was to capture the social representations circulating in the two locales, along with the ways in which access to, and appropriation of these change over time

Personal accounts contain a number of transition points and the ways that people use social representations as symbolic resources to negotiate changes in the landscape and related practices can reveal how their relationships with education and work are maintained or modified. However, a number of methods were not appropriate for the elicitation of personal accounts. For example, focus groups are intended to elicit understandings perspectives and discourses (Berg, 1995), and can be used as either a primary or supplementary research method. Focus groups can generate alternative and unexpected perspectives (e.g. Michell and West, 1996; Michell, 1998; Bloor et al, 2001). However, while focus groups can be particularly effective in the elicitation of participant contribution and can help to

identify themes and shared language, this method cannot yield the distinctive personal narrative that is necessary for reaching individual subjectivities. Focus group narratives are co-constructed by members of the group and deny the individual the opportunity to remember and present their unique story. Structured survey questionnaires also limit personal input from participants (Robson, 2002). The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which individuals appropriate social representations and use them in the construction of accounts of education and learning. While questionnaires allow for personal responses the questions may prompt responses of a particular type or scope. They set parameters for the range of replies that can be given, and generally fail to allow for elaboration of answers to explain and justify. They may also discourage repetition and contradiction, which would prevent identification of patterns, inconsistencies and interpretations of the personal meanings involved in the response.

2.1.5.2 Temporal aspects of social representations

A key issue was how to reach the depth of a social representation that has a longstanding historical basis. Again pragmatic decisions determined the design with regard to addressing temporal aspects. A longitudinal study was impractical, due to the time limits of the study and, although longitudinal studies are effective for studying phenomena over long time periods, such an approach would be impractical for exploring the appropriation of cultural resources during entire lifetimes - however, a follow up study could re-visit some of the participants at later points in their lives to identify age-related changes in remembered experience and use of symbolic resources. In order to obtain a sense of the changes experienced across fifty years a sample comprising three generations was included. This offers a comparison of how the locale has provided social representations of education and work, and how these have been taken up and used for the projection of particular education and work futures.

2.1.6 Personal accounts

Narrative is present in every aspect of people's lives, irrespective of age, place or society (Barthes, 1977), and narratives are prevalent representational forms of human symbolic activity (Laszlo, 2002). People tell stories in identifiable forms such as personal development histories (Wengraf, 2000) and include culturally recognized roles (Propp, 1968). Narrative interviewing is an established method of researching social representations (e.g. Herzlich, 1973; Jodelet, 1991) as, when people organize events into a story, they instil them with personal meanings and values, which reflect social representations (Jovchelovitch, 2002). Narrative accounts make it possible for implicit assumptions and norms of both the individual and cultural groups to be communicated (Wengraf, 2000), thus they:

‘...serve as a storehouse of shared knowledge and beliefs in human societies and are an essential source of cultural learning.’

(Nelson, 2004, p.87).

Social life, social organizations, social action and social identities are constructed through narrative. Master narratives, such as neo-liberalism provide the context for public narratives, which are attached to culture and institutional formations - family, government, schools, etc. (Somers, 1994). These in turn are the source for the construction of ontological narratives that identify who we are and what we do and can do. Murray states:

‘There are events that seem to challenge standard plot lines. These are the events in our lives that do not easily fit into a coherent form. It is this difficulty in creating a narrative about certain personal or societal events that can leave a person, or a community, adrift, uncertain, and anxious.’

(2003, p.99)

Thus differences in the ways that individuals select and use elements of master narratives to maintain a coherent ontological narrative can provide an insight into both the salience of particular social representations circulating in a locale, along with the positions people have been and are offered and how these have been taken up.

Narrative methods can be problematical, as structures inherent in narratives impose limitations on what can be communicated. The eliciting of retrospective accounts introduces a further layer to the narrative, with adult perspectives filtering memory and interpretation. Additionally, the narrative must be seen as a co-construction of both interviewee and interviewer. However, there is no direct access to the social world other than through personal meaning making and the inclusion of two different interview methods is designed to confirm the dominant social representations of locale.

2.1.6.1 Photo-elicitation interviews

The use of images in interviewing allows individuals to engage with their environment, which enables insight into the socio-cultural elements of their experiences (Collier, 1986). Images have been used in a variety of ways in studies exploring social representations (e.g. Milgram, 1984; Pailhous, 1984; Gillespie, 2003 in Zittoun et al., 2003; Iverson, 2005), and they have particular relevance to a study that explores the relationships between people and their locales. Milgram's (1984) work has shown that specific features of a person's locale can have more salience than others, and how salience can vary between individuals. Milgram showed how individuals construct inner maps of their locale in unique ways that depend upon how they use, or experience, their city. Characteristics that were most salient to an individual's life not only featured most prominently in their drawn maps, but also influenced how they described their city to others. A primary aim of this project is to explore how certain aspects of the locale have impacted upon people's ability to forge education and work trajectories. It was necessary then, not to identify unique mental maps of the study locales, but to explore which types of feature had salience for each participant, and which types meant little to them. To this end, photographic images of selected physical features were used to design a photo-elicitation interview. Photo-elicitation has been incorporated into semi-structured interviews in ethnographic and social studies research in order to elicit memories, observations and explanations (Harper, 1997). Photo-elicitation interviews serve a unique purpose, and are of particular importance to this research, as they make clear and strong links between

the psychological and the physical and cultural. Within social representations research photographs have been used to excellent effect in studies as diverse as young people's social representations of Art (Ivinson, 2005), and the identity task of claiming particular tourist narratives (Gillespie, see Zittoun et al., 2003).

On a practical level, semi-structured interviews incorporating photographs emphasize the images as the objects of study, taking the focus off the interviewee, which can facilitate a relaxed rapport between interviewer and interviewee (Clark-Ibanez, 2004) and increase the participant's talk (Harper, 2002), particularly when they position the interviewee as expert.

2.1.6.2 Unstructured narrative interviews

Unstructured interviews allow relative freedom to invoke social representations of the locale, and of education and work that have some meaning for them, and they 'allow the researcher to approach the interviewee's experiential world in a more comprehensive way; this world being structured in itself' (Flick, 2002, p.96).

Thus narrative interviews are primarily used to elicit biographical information, and this method is particularly appropriate to an investigation of the ways in which people use social representations to construct their subjective worlds and how they draw upon these to negotiate ruptures within these worlds. However, while Lofland and Lofland propose that the interviewer use '*a list of things to be sure to ask about*' (1995, p.85, italics original), the purpose of this study - to explore each individual's unique way of making sense of education and work - requires that the interviewees be allowed the freedom to invite the interviewer to join their personal journey. Prompts will only be employed if the interview stalls, or if the interviewee digresses to an inappropriate level. Unstructured narratives provide a method that complements photo-elicitation interviews in terms of multiple methods, as free narratives allow the construction of 'inside - out' accounts, rather than the 'outside - in' accounts elicited by the photo-elicitation interviews. This was intended to investigate which parts of the 'outside' - the physical environment - different people used while constructing and presenting their unrestricted stories.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Sample

The participants for both data collection methods were recruited through either opportunity or snowball sampling methods. In Abertillery, the majority of participants were recruited through snowball sampling, while all but five Ynysawdre participants were recruited through opportunity sampling (see table 2.2). All participants have lived their lives and attended school in either the Abertillery or Ynysawdre locales. The sample was selected to represent three specific generations of men and women, and ideally, in each locale would have been equally distributed across the age and gender categories (Table 2.1).

The age groups selected were: 16-25 years, 30-45 years and 50-70 years, as it was required that this sample include those who have: a) experienced the dominance of heavy industry, b) experienced the decline of heavy industry and c) no experience of heavy industry in the locale. Alongside this distinction runs a second set of categories related to the type of education provision available during the different eras. Thus the sample selection included: those who experienced the grammar school/secondary modern divide, with its emphasis on the eleven-plus examination (e.g. the 1950s and 1960s), people whose schooling took place during the era of comprehensive education (e.g., the 1970s), and young people who were experiencing the ‘national curriculum’ education currently offered (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Summary of sample

<u>Age</u>	<u>Experience of heavy industry</u>	<u>Experience of education</u>
50 - 70 yrs Male / Female	Heavy industry present	Grammar / Secondary education
30 – 45 yrs Male / Female	Declining / newly absent heavy industry	Comprehensive education
16 – 25 yrs Male / Female	No heavy industry	National curriculum

However, the actual sample recruited does not reflect the ideal design, thus the findings cannot be generalised. Difficulties recruiting particular sub-groups resulted in an imbalance in both locales; in Abertillery older men dominated (Table 2.2), while in Ynysawdre a relatively high number of younger women took part (Table 2.3). The pattern in Abertillery could be explained by the interest and eagerness of older men in Abertillery to tell their stories, to describe their lives in a thriving town during its mining heyday. In Ynysawdre, the interest of the head of sixth form at Ynysawdre Comprehensive was the impetus for the participation of a high number of A level students, with young women more willing to be interviewed than young men.

Table 2.2: Age and gender distribution - Abertillery

Key

O = Opportunity sample

S = Snowball sample

Inst. = Instrument

Comm. = Community

Unemp. = Unemployed

Age			Presence of Industry Type of education system					
50 - 70 yrs			Heavy industry present Grammar / Secondary education					
O	David,	Retired	Inst. 1		S	Mary	Retired	Inst. 1
S	Ron,	Retired	Inst. 1					
S	Richard	Retired	Inst. 1					
S	Malcolm	Retired	Inst. 1					
S	Jim	Retired	Inst. 2		O	Jean	Retired	Inst. 2
O	Theo	Retired	Inst. 2		S	Hazel	Retired	Inst. 2
	Adrian	Retired	Inst. 2		O	Ellen	Retired	Inst. 2
S	Ashley	Retired	Inst. 2					
S								
30 – 45 yrs			Declining / newly absent heavy industry Comprehensive education					
O	Peter	Comm. worker	Inst. 1		S	Juliet	Comm. worker	Inst. 1
					S	Melissa	Unemp.	Inst. 1
O	Alex	Librarian	Inst. 2					
S	Howard	Librarian	Inst. 2		S	Deborah	Unemp.	Inst. 2
O	Jeremy	Carer	Inst. 2		S	Rachel	Comm. worker	Inst. 2
S	Sam	Comm. worker	Inst. 2					
16 – 25 yrs			No heavy industry National curriculum					
O	Stuart	Student	Inst. 1		O	Bethan	Student	Inst. 1
					O	Lucy	Student	Inst. 1
O	Liam	Soldier	Inst. 2					
S	Neil	Unemp.	Inst. 2		S	Amy	Unemp.	Inst. 2
					S	Kirsten	Admin assistant	Inst. 2
					S	Sarah	Student	Inst. 2

Table 2.3: **Age and gender distribution - Ynysawdre**

<u>Age</u>		<u>Presence of Industry</u> <u>Type of education system</u>						
50 - 70 yrs		Heavy industry present Grammar / Secondary education						
S	Lewis	Retired	Inst. 1		S	May	Retired	Inst. 1
					O	Angela	Retired	Inst. 2
					O	Cassie	Retired	Inst. 2
30 – 45 yrs		Declining / newly absent heavy industry Comprehensive education						
O	Thomas	Furniture restorer	Inst. 1		S	Susan	Shelf stacker	Inst. 1
S	Philip	De-pollution technician	Inst. 1		O	Julie	Teacher	Inst. 2
16 – 25 yrs		No heavy industry National curriculum						
O	Ross	Student	Inst. 2		O	Alice	Student	Inst. 1
O	Luke	Student	Inst. 2		O	Danielle	Student	Inst. 1
					O	Stephani	Student	Inst. 1
					O	Chloe	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Jodie	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Kate	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Olivia	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Megan	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Nia	Student	Inst. 2
					O	Shelley	Student	Inst. 2

The samples for each interview stage

Each participant took part in one of two interview stages.

- Photo-elicitation interviews:

Participants were accessed through both opportunity sampling and a snowball strategy. In the Ynysawdre locale these were found through initial approaches to the Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre, a public house, a residential home, the local post office and a local comprehensive school. In the Abertillery locale the photo-

elicitation interview participants were accessed via Communities First, a prominent church, the local library and a local comprehensive school.

Although it was initially intended to include equal numbers of men and women from the two locales, in practice this proved to be a problem. In the final count various sub-groups are under-represented and, in the case of Ynysawdre, following 25 refusals to participate, three sub-groups are not represented. Although the actual ages of the non-participants could not be corroborated, it is estimated that these were:

5 men in the middle group (one approached in the public house, 2 in the lifelong learning centre and one in the street)

7 men in the older group (three approached in the public house, two in the lifelong learning centre and two in the street)

3 women in the middle group (one approached in the public house and two in the post office)

2 women in the older group (both approached in the post office)

5 men in the younger group (all approached on Heol Cwrddy near the Jubilee Crescent housing estate)

6 women in the younger group (3 approached outside the Filco supermarket and 3 outside one of the ranks of small shops)

The Ynysawdre locale is not a particularly affluent one, with the Sarn area containing some poor housing. Thus the men and women between sixteen and sixty present in the locale during weekdays were likely to be not in paid employment. This might have been a reason for the relatively high numbers of refusals, particularly given that the topic of the interviews was to be education and work experiences, a subject that could have elicited strong emotional responses. The fact that the interviewer identified herself as a researcher attached to a university could have further discouraged participation, as this might have emphasised the role of power relations. However, additional reasons might also have included the lack of a private location in which to undertake the interviews, a lack of time on the part of the interviewees, as they went about their business, or a lack of interest in talking of the past to a stranger. Approaching young people

roved to be the most challenging recruitment experience. Lone young people appeared wary and at times suspicious, and were unwilling to attend the Lifelong Learning Centre, while those approached while in a group often appeared embarrassed in the presence of their peers, and were unwilling to agree to talk about themselves.

The refusals among the men in Ynysawdre were somewhat surprising when compared to the relatively high interest of men in the Abertillery locale. In Abertillery 16 potential participants refused to contribute. It is estimated that these were:

- 1 man in the middle group (approached in the church)
- 3 women in the middle group (two approached in the library and one in the church)
- 2 women in the older group (one approached in the library and one approached in the church).
- 7 men in the younger group (4 approached in Working Links and 3 in High Street)
- 3 women in the younger group (1 approached in Working Links and two in the Arcade)

Diagram 2.1: Summary of Stage1 sample (photo-elicitation interviews) –
Abertillery

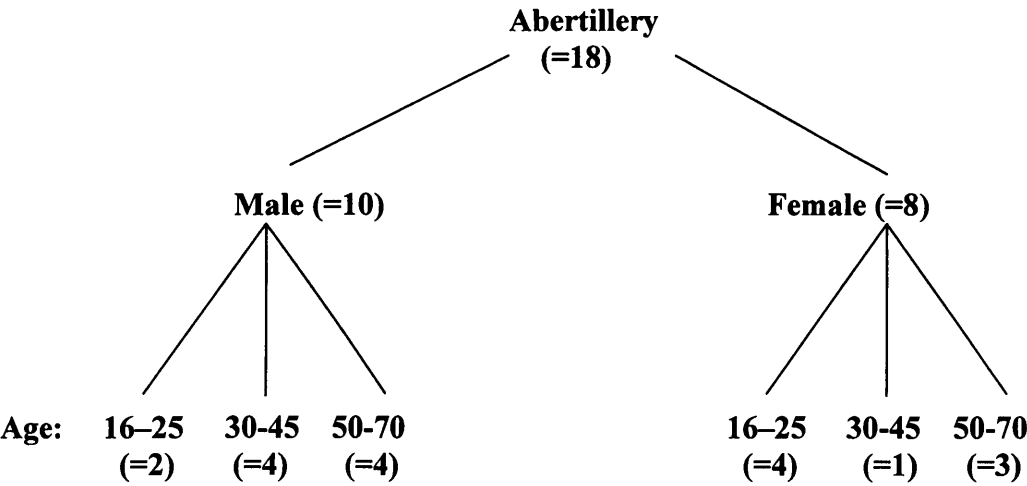
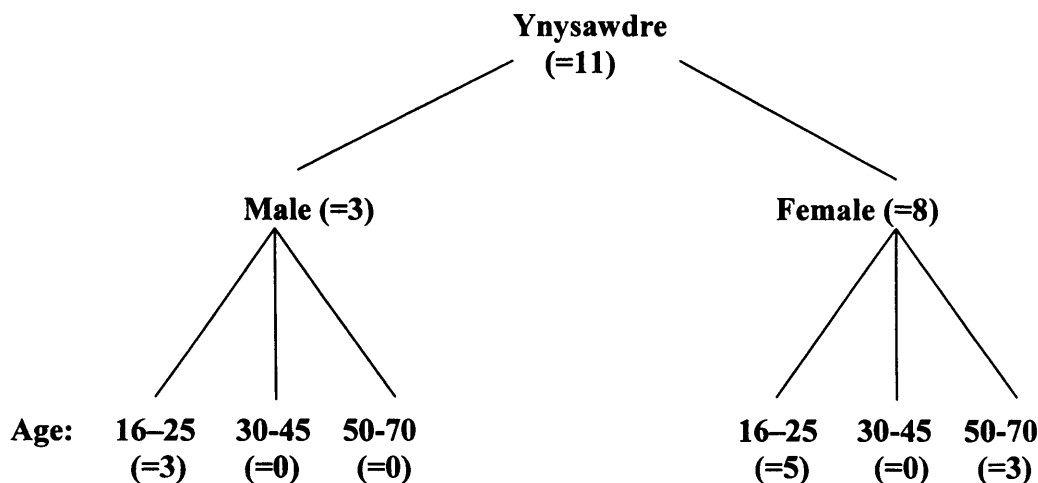


Diagram 2. 2: Summary of Stage1 sample (photo-elicitation interviews) –

Ynysawdre



2.2.2 Unstructured interviews

The recruitment of a different cohort for the unstructured interview stage was important to the study, due to the structure and guidance that would be provided to the first cohort by the photographs and accompanying interview schedule. The use of a simple prompt question to the second cohort would allow identification of the ways in which social representations recognized by photo-elicitation interviewees, spontaneously emerged in the unstructured narratives of the second cohort. The target number of unstructured interviews in each locale was nine and this was achieved in Ynysawdre through snowball sampling after the initial contacting of gatekeepers. These were a work associate of a member of the researcher's family and the head of sixth form at a local comprehensive. Five of the nine were members of a single family (two in the older group, two in the middle group and one in the younger group), with an additional participant introduced as a close childhood friend of the male middle group member of the family. The remaining three participants, all in the younger age group were accessed via a local comprehensive school. Research could not identify a local venue at which young people not engaged in education gathered. The local youth club organiser, a teacher at the comprehensive school suggested that this would not be a useful venue as the club members were all aged under sixteen. There was

only one refusal amongst this group of participants. This was a female member of the family taking part who was in the middle group. Due to education commitments, she was unable to spare the time to be interviewed.

The number of unstructured interviews in Abertillery exceeded the target figure, with snowball sampling resulting in eleven participants volunteering to contribute accounts. Key gatekeepers were the curator of the local museum, two directors of Communities First centres and the headmaster of a local comprehensive school. Four participants were accessed through the museum, four through Communities First and three through the comprehensive school. Three attempts to meet young people through the local youth club failed to locate any young people; the club provided activities for retired community members and parent-toddler facilities, but appeared to offer little for local youth. There were seven refusals at this stage, one from a woman from the older age group who initially agreed to contribute, but who looked extremely uncomfortable as the interview began. When asked if she was certain she wanted to be interviewed she declared her discomfort when talking about her personal history and altered her decision. A second refusal was from a retired schoolteacher, introduced through the museum, who explained that he did not want to talk about his past. The remaining five refusals were from young people at the Working Links Office in the centre of Abertillery.

Diagram 2.3: Summary of Stage 2 (unstructured interviews) - Abertillery

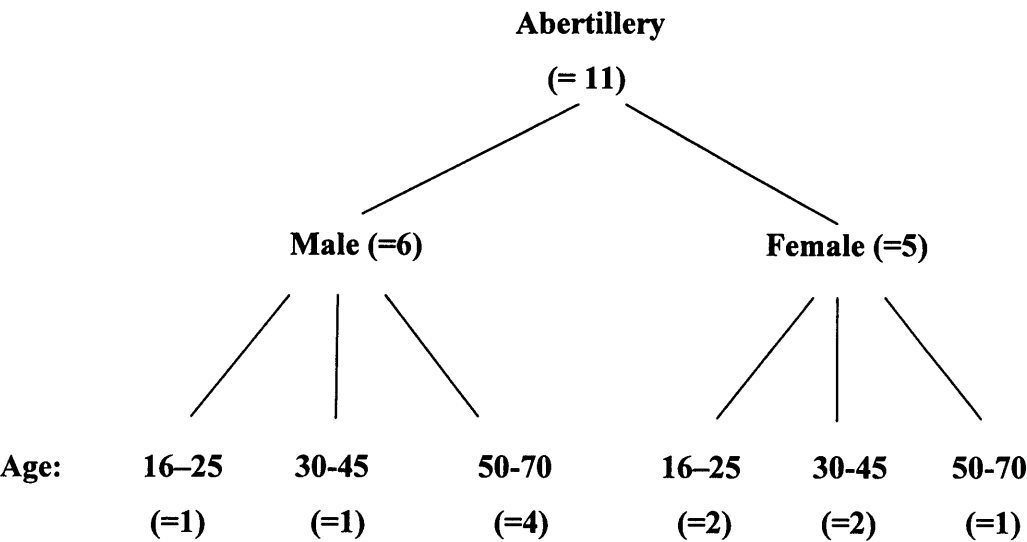
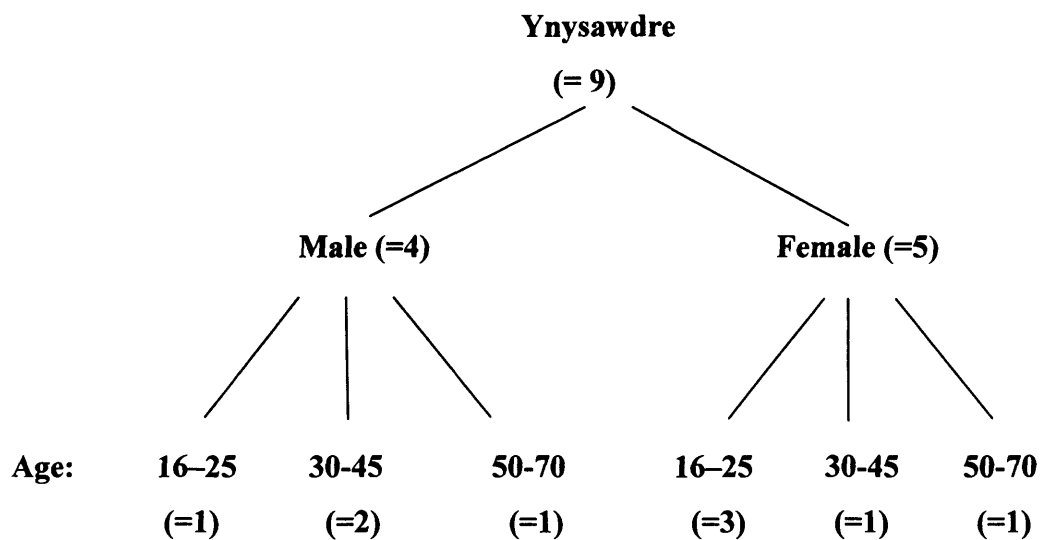


Diagram 2.4: Summary of Stage 2 (unstructured interviews) - Ynysawdre



It is acknowledged that for each of the two interviews stages, the imbalance in the numbers of participants in each age and gender group will have implications for the findings of this study. In both locales it is the younger age group that has provided very specific social representations through their accounts. This is due to the fact that many of this age group has benefited from some kind of non-compulsory education. It is recognized that a lack of young people who are disengaged from education has left a gap in the picture of each locale, and also in the exploration of how young people appropriate social representations in order to project futures.

In Ynysawdre, the recruitment of five members of a single family for the unstructured interview stage could be interpreted as a limitation of the study. However, this also adds to the findings through the opportunity to consider generational shifts in the recognition and uptake of social representations in one close family living in the same street. Interviews with these participants allowed for the exploration of how individuals acknowledge differences in each other's understandings of education and work, while they continue to present their unique personal accounts.

2.2.3 Designing the methods

The following section addresses the methods required to address the two distinct vantage points. Again, it is important to make clear that while these have been artificially separated for the purpose of capturing something of the material culture of the locales, the theoretical standpoint underpinning the study maintains that the social and the individual are not fundamentally separable.

2.2.4 Mapping the locales

Social representations reside not only in discourse, but also in other aspects of the physical and symbolic culture of the locale and the aim at this stage was to capture a segment of the local culture in order to re-present it to community members during the photo-elicitation interviews. The initial issue was how an outsider could determine the physical aspects that were likely to be significant to local residents. Thus the mapping stage entailed utilising a range of sources of information. Additionally, a combination of methods avoids a potential problem identified by Black (2003) of the privileging of field observation, specifically a focus on artefacts (buildings, manmade landscapes) over complementary forms of analysis such as documentary methods.

2.2.4.1 Literature relevant to South Wales valleys

Preliminary research entailed a literature search for relevant studies of South Wales. The School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University has provided a particularly rich source of information due to the expertise of the researchers and the amount of work generated in this field. Education research within South Wales includes studies of educational attainment (e.g. Salisbury, Rees and Gorard, 1999), studies of early school experiences, which are becoming increasingly key determinants of later patterns of education, and informal learning in South Wales (e.g. Gorard, Fevre and Rees, 1999). A major springboard for this project has been the study of learning participation patterns in South Wales by Gorard, Rees

and colleagues (e.g. Rees, Williamson and Istance, 1996; Gorard et al., 1998; Gorard, Rees, and Fevre, 1999c). Specifically, Gorard and Rees's (2002) research pertaining to education in Blaenau Gwent and Bridgend provided a major early resource. Lloyd-Jones's book (2002) and related Cardiff PhD thesis (2005) contributed information regarding the work of the People and Work Unit in Blaenau Gwent, while an unbound copy of an unpublished PhD thesis (Phillips, 1982), located in Abertillery library, provided information regarding the mining and employment history of that locale.

2.2.4.2 Archival sources

A number of archival sources were accessed to provide information for the 'locales' chapters and/or form the basis of data collection instrument no.1. The initial search of academic literature guided some of the following archival searches.

a. Databases

Statistical data from both UK and Welsh national databases were gathered to paint a picture of the locales regarding population, health, education, employment, unemployment and housing. The Office of National Statistics web site provided information from the 2001 census, plus more recent updated figures in certain cases. The data for the two locales could be compared to Wales as a whole providing a sense of the general positions of the locales. The Poverty site (www.poverty.org.uk) was also a source of further data regarding lifestyles and employment. The Welsh Assembly Government databases provided education, training and employment statistics (e.g. National Assembly for Wales Statistical Releases; Welsh Education Statistics). Additionally both Bridgend County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council websites were a source of statistical information regarding local education provision and assessment results.

b. Reports

A range of reports was accessed to gather information about the locales. The Estyn School Inspection Reports were available online, and provided a great deal of information on each of the schools in the two locales. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council were particularly helpful, providing copies of reports on paper (e.g. Powell Dobson Regeneration Framework and Action Plan for Abertillery, 2005), on CD (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005) and via email (e.g. Abertillery Land Use Report, 2006). It became apparent during the research that Blaenau Gwent Council's commitment to the regeneration of Abertillery is considerable, and at all times staff were willing to reveal the results of this investment. A number of departments took part in assisting this research, and all were extremely efficient. In contrast, no reports relating to the Ynysawdre study area were available. On a number of occasions staff at Bridgend Council stated that they could provide no information about the Ynysawdre study locale.

c. Maps

A range of maps was used, initially to both determine and illustrate the extent of the area included in each locale, and to plan the mobile methods strategies. Maps were also used to illustrate specific points in the 'Locales' sections of the report, such as how the retail outlets are used in Abertillery town centre (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2006). The staff at Blaenau Gwent Council were again extremely helpful and appeared to be able to locate cartographic information about Abertillery relatively easily. Bridgend Council, in contrast, could provide no such information on the Ynysawdre study locale.

d. Community Web Sites

The Internet was a source of much information about the locales that was not available through more traditional routes. A search of community websites highlighted a major difference between the two locales; sites of interest to the Abertillery community were available, while no such websites were located for the Ynysawdre study area.

A number of websites dedicated to Abertillery and the surrounding district provided information about, not only the history of the locale, but also the sense of community that exists for local people. Specifically, the website dedicated to the Cwmtillery community (www.cwmtillery.com, 2007) provided a rich picture of the locale and its community; at the centre of its home page is a photograph of Cwmtillery Colliery, surrounded by images depicting pigeon racing, a church, the local countryside and a miner's lamp. This provided guidance regarding the possible significance of particular physical features of the locale. Although primarily a meeting place and source of information for residents of Cwmtillery, the site acknowledges both Abertillery and Six Bells. A further website - The Abertillery and District Museum Society - provided relevant historical information and also a first introduction to the people of the locale. A telephone call to the museum curator provided an introduction to key elements of the material culture and access to potential participants.

The websites for the two local colleges were also searched for historical information about the histories of the colleges. Bridgend College provided an online college history, while Ebbw Vale College gave no historical information; their website focuses only on the courses they currently offer.

An additional website that proved extremely informative was welshcoalmunes.co.uk. Although this is not a community website catering for either of the two study locales –it is a national site including collieries located throughout Wales - it can nonetheless be considered a community website, albeit through practice-related membership rather than local geography. This site proved extremely valuable with regard to the collieries in the Bridgend region. While historical information about local collieries was forthcoming in the Abertillery locale itself, due to records maintained by the museum, in Ynysawdre no such local data source was available, thus welshcoalmunes.co.uk provided much of the data relating to collieries in the Ynysawdre locale.

e. Newspapers

An online archival search of national and local newspapers (e.g. Guardian Online; Western Mail) located a number of items relating to the Abertillery locale, such as the closing of Ebbw Vale steelworks, the opening of the nearby rail link at Ebbw Vale, and the renovation projects undertaken in Abertillery, including the Museum and the Metropole Centre. The newspapers also reported several closures of large employers in the Bridgend area (e.g. Sony and Christie Tyler). However, no news items were relevant to the specific Ynysawdre locale.

f. Historical texts

A range of historical texts about South Wales can be found in local and academic libraries, and these served as an introduction to the South Wales valleys region. However, in order to gather specific information on the locales themselves a search for historical texts on the two locales began in the local libraries. It was immediately apparent that, again, there was a difference between the two locales in terms of availability of information. In Abertillery library two books about the town were located. These provided primarily a pictorial history of the town, and were used mainly as guides for the mobile methods element, with the images from the books not reproduced for this study. In Abertillery, the museum was again a valuable source of information in the form of historical texts, offering two books compiled by key Museum Society members. Both books were purchased. One, 'Abertillery and District History 2000', consists of a very brief history of particular aspects, primarily those relating to heavy industry. Topics include local collieries, Warwill's Foundry and Jones's bus company, which took miners and steelworkers to their places of employment. A second historical text, entitled 'Voices of Abertillery, Aberbeeg and Llanhilleth', contained historical information in the form of anecdotes provided by local elderly people. Sections in this book include 'The mines', 'Other work' and 'Childhood and education'. The production of these texts and their content again communicate the strong sense of community held by people in this locale.

In contrast to the interest shown in Abertillery, a search of local libraries produced no historical texts about this area. The local library is situated in nearby Aberkenfig, and staff here admitted that no texts relevant to Tondy, Ynysawdre or Sarn were held. However, colliery communities, such as Maesteg, located further up the valleys *were* represented on the library shelves, suggesting the value placed upon coal mining by local people in South Wales, including local historians. A single text, a guidebook for the Garw Valley, was donated to this research by a teacher at a local comprehensive school. Although the Garw Valley is not within the study area, a number of relevant schools and collieries were located here. However, this text was aimed primarily at tourists to the area and contained very little information of use to the study. The much larger Bridgend library offers a local history section, but this also failed to provide useful information about the specific study area.

g. Telephone calls

Telephone calls were essential for following up on prior conversations to confirm or elaborate on information. The volunteers at the Abertillery and District Museum were helpful when contacted, as were two librarians in Abertillery Library. In Ynysawdre the voluntary worker at the Lifelong Learning Centre previously visited continued to be of help when later contacted by telephone. Telephone calls were used to particularly good effect in the gathering of information on schools in the Ynysawdre locale. In the absence of a specialist such as the retired headmaster in Abertillery, each school was contacted by telephone for the purpose of eliciting historical and current information about the school itself. Certain key gatekeepers were also contacted initially by telephone, including Abertillery museum curator, the Communities First co-ordinator at Six Bells, and the contacts at the two comprehensive schools that provided participants.



2.2.4.3 *Mobile methods*

Initially the fieldwork entailed driving around the locale to gain an idea of the scale and composition of the two locales, and to identify particular sites of interest to the research. A preliminary aim was to locate important sites, such as the prior positions of the collieries. Few have landmarks, and where collieries once stood there are open fields, hills or contemporary buildings. Both Ynysawdre Comprehensive and Abertillery Comprehensive stand on the sites of former mines, along with a sports centre in Abertillery and a housing estate in Ynysawdre. Industrial and Business sites, such as Cwmtillery Industrial Estate and Rose Heyworth Business Park in Abertillery and Tondu Enterprise Centre in Ynysawdre also cover former coal industry sites. However, walking each locale was essential, and for each visit to one of the locales, a small area was selected and a systematic walk around streets, lanes, arcades, parks etc. was undertaken. Extensive field notes were taken to record aspects of the material culture and to identify key sites and institutions. A number of strategic visits were made to specific sites, with a view to listening to people talking and/or engaging people in conversation.

Many hours were spent in conversation with community members who spoke of the changes that the locale had undergone, particularly regarding the physical landscape, employment and shopping opportunities. Some personal photographs were offered as evidence of these changes, however, as these often included family members and friends, or were of poor quality due to age no request was made to use these in the study. It was apparent that older people enjoyed telling the history of their locale to a stranger. However, younger people were considerably less forthcoming, giving the impression that they did not think the locale an interesting topic of conversation. This suggested that the photo-elicitation stage of the study would achieve its aim of determining differences in appropriation of social representations of the locale.

In Abertillery the strategic sites were:

- o Abertillery and District Museum
- o Church Street (the main shopping area)
- o Shops (particularly one in the Arcade that is run by the local councillor responsible for the cwmtilley.com website)
- o The 'stress club' (a group run by a mental health nurse for those suffering psychological stress – this was mainly attended by ex-miners and the researcher was invited to attend by one of these)
- o Working Links
- o Abertillery Library

In Ynysawdre the major sites were:

- o Sarn Lifelong Learning centre
- o Post Office
- o Filco supermarket, Ynysawdre
- o Rank of shops on Heol Ganol, Sarn
- o Sarn Social Club
- o Llynfi Public House, Tondu

Abertillery:

Abertillery and District Museum was a particularly rich source of information. The curator led me on a tour of the museum, revealing the origins of the artefacts, explaining who would have used them and describing when and how they would have been used. This tour provided an early introduction into daily life in the community, complementing the historical data gleaned from literature searches, historical texts and online sources. Subsequent visits resulted in voluntary members of retirement age providing distinct personal experiences, memories and ways of presenting their locale. Most notably, there was a distinct gender difference, with men focusing on the town's mining past and women explaining domestic details. Each contributor also volunteered suggestions regarding the physical features of the locale they felt should be included in the selection of

photographs for data collection instrument no.1. The curator also acted as a gatekeeper for the unstructured stage of interviewing.

An invitation by two ex-miners to 'walk the mountains' to view the beauty of the local area was declined, although suggestions from both regarding potential photographic subjects were accepted. No photographs were taken of the people involved in any stage of the research.

Abertillery Library was also a source of oral information. The library staff local to the town were keen to talk about life in Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells, and drew upon both primary and secondary information to describe the changes within the locale. Again suggestions for the photograph collection were forthcoming, with ideas from these workers of middle group age supplying very different ideas to the older museum volunteers. A gatekeeper at the library assisted during the photo-elicitation stage of interviewing.

Two Communities First offices (Abertillery and Six Bells) and Working Links, a public, private, voluntary partnership in Abertillery that works with employers and other partner organisations to get people into training and work provided information regarding initiatives to engage young people in learning and young people's attitudes towards participation in education and training. The Communities First Partnership Co-ordinators at both Abertillery and Six Bells acted as gatekeepers for the photo-elicitation interviews stage of data collection. However, although staff at Working Links attempted this, volunteers were not forthcoming.

A retired headmaster of a local school provided a detailed chronological history of the schools in the Abertillery locale. The education system in Abertillery has undergone major change over the past fifty years and, while little historical information was available from the local council, a rich picture of the school system in the locale was obtained from this local man.

Suggestions for photographing were also received during more spontaneous researcher-initiated conversation, such as those with people met outside shops, in

parks and on the street. In Abertillery, a number of people showed interest in the photographing of seemingly uninteresting features of the locale, and when the reason was explained, further suggestions were forthcoming.

Ynysawdre:

Only three sites proved useful within the Ynysawdre locale.

At Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre three voluntary members of staff - two ex-local councillors and a taxi driver - spoke at length about the locale, providing historical and geographical information. These all felt that, as a key local resource, the Lifelong Learning Centre was suggested as a key feature for the photo-elicitation instrument.

At Ynysawdre Comprehensive, the head of the sixth form both provided local information and acted as gatekeeper for the younger group of interviewees.

A visit to Tondu Ironworks was less productive. The building has been developed as a community resource by one of the four Groundwork Trusts in Wales, information focuses on regeneration, not history. However, the Trust did provide one of the photographs used in the final collection.

In both locales, the motivations of community members regarding potential photographic subjects appeared to be varied; some suggested features precisely because they were striking, while others suggested seemingly everyday aspects of their environment. A balance was attempted as, although Harper advocates resisting the temptation to photograph the 'visually arresting' (2002, p.20), community members considered many local features to be relevant and representative precisely because they were prominent. However, as the aim of this study to capture a slice of the everyday material culture available in the locales, photographic subjects included streets, fields, houses, shops, structures (e.g. pithead wheels), buildings, vehicles, mountains, streams and lakes. The final selection was guided by the photographic categories (see section 2.2.6) and piloting (section 2.2.8).

2.2.5 Capturing social representations of 'locale'

Specific instruments were required for an investigation of the relationship between material culture and people's engagement with education and work. They formed the processes used to afford a form of triangulation in the method. Initially, the intention was to employ standard semi-structured interviews in combination with unstructured interviews. The semi-structured format was intended to identify specific themes with regard to the social representations salient to different groups of community members. However, evidence from initial piloting with five people (two acquaintances and three fellow PhD students) determined that the interview schedule was heavily influenced by the researcher's expectations of how people relate to their locales. In order to maintain a focus upon the physical locale, the pre-set questions erected constraining parameters within which the participants could respond. A method was required that would maintain an emphasis on the physical locale and identify how material culture shapes personal experience, while allowing each participant the freedom to present personal connections with their locale

It was decided to incorporate a photo-elicitation technique into semi-structured interviews. As Harper asserts:

“[P]hoto elicitation mines deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words alone interviews”

(Harper, 2002, p.22).

There was a need to create an instrument that would allow the re-presentation of aspects of the physical landscape to community members in order to investigate social representations of education. While images exist materially in the world they gain meaning from people (Prosser, 2006, p.2), thus an instrument was designed that would expose the participants to a selection of visual images of their locale as a basis for the elicitation of personal accounts.

2.2.6 Design of instrument no.1 – photographs

Both auto-driven and researcher-generated photo-elicitation has been used effectively in social science research. Auto-driven photo-elicitation allows the participants to make their own selections based on what is meaningful to them, and can result in unique libraries of images, that allow the telling of very personal stories. However, while auto-driven photo-elicitation forges strong connections to the social, there were a number of reasons why this method was not used for this research. Researcher-produced photographs are effective for theory-driven research (Clark-Ibanez, 2004), and this was a major reason for the decision to use this method. It supported the research focus on identifying generational and gender differences in how particular types of physical features were understood and used in the construction of coherent accounts. The use of the same collection of images for all interviews was considered to be an effective method of achieving this. The use of researcher-generated images to elicit personal accounts has been used for a number of decades, and, while allowing interviewees to communicate their own understandings of features and settings, they maintain the researcher control of the nature of the images.

One practical reason for the decision to use researcher-generated images was that, while research has involved participants in the taking of photographs of landscapes (e.g. Stewart, Leibert and Larkin, 2003), the sample for this study was to include a number of older participants and, as the valley/mountain terrain in Abertillery has many steep inclines, it was not considered practical (or indeed sensitive) to request that these people walk the locale with a camera. Further, auto-driven photo-elicitation relies on participants who have the motivation to take the photographs. Many such studies have been successful, but these often have as their focus the personal relationships and social networks of the participants, allowing the photography to be concentrated around family and the immediate neighbourhood (e.g. Clark-Ibanez, 2004) with the resulting high interest and relatively little effort required encouraging participation. An aim of this study was to represent a range of aspects of the local material culture and early enquiries suggested that people lacked the time or motivation to participate in this way.

A major design issue was how to select the images to be used in the interviews. A priority was to include images that would represent local features that would be salient in some way for each of the three groups, and this presented the problem of equivalence. The distinctiveness of the two locales determined their inclusion in the study, but also provided the two communities with very different physical features. The use of categories of physical features was determined to be the most effective solution to this, as similar image collections could be presented to participants in both Abertillery and Ynysawdre. This allowed particular aspects to be captured, subject to confirmation through piloting. However, a compromise was necessary in order to collect similarly categorized collections. While, in Abertillery all the categories were addressed by the material culture available in study locale itself, for the Ynysawdre collection a small number of photographs of features located outside the boundaries of the locale needed to be included, for example larger employers. The categories were selected to represent different aspects of material culture in the locales and the final selection represented:

1. Local employers
2. Closed businesses
3. New enterprise
4. Sites of mining and steel-works (as they are today)
5. Old local industry
6. Churches
7. Education
8. Shopping
9. Entertainment/Leisure
10. Sport
11. Transport
12. Recreation
13. Graffiti

The parameters for the initial image categories were determined through careful consideration of the research questions. The decisions were also strongly influenced by information gained from academic literature, historical texts, community websites, online news archives, and from information provided by contacts made before visiting the locales. Subsequently, personal familiarisation with the locales through solo walks following geographical maps, along with suggestions and advice from community members during the 'mapping' stage of

the fieldwork, suggested specific features for inclusion in each category. This diverse range of guiding influences resulted in the need for a combination of systematic design and craft to determine the finished instrument. Although every care was taken in forming the categories, pragmatic influences meant that each photograph collection consisted only of a subjectively selected set of images and, consequently this method has limitations.

Selecting the final collection of images

The initial Abertillery collection numbered ninety-one 5”x 7” images, while the Ynysawdre collection numbered seventy-two 5”x 7” images. Piloting was undertaken at this stage in order to:

- a) determine which features could be included in the final collection, and
- b) which images achieved consensus with regard to clear categorisation.
- c) the optimum number of images that would both represent the locale and provide a manageable collection

The images needed to be presented in such a way as to identify particular types of material culture that have different salience for people of different generations and genders, in order to emphasize differences in the social representations appropriated by the different groups of community members. It could not be assumed that participants representing both genders and three distinct generations would interpret the images in the same way. Potential categories had been identified prior to undertaking the fieldwork. However, it was necessary to determine the final selection of categories of images through piloting in the locales themselves. Additionally, for pragmatic reasons, while the final number of images needed to be adequate for performing the research task, it had to remain manageable regarding the time and effort that would be required of the participants. Thus it was necessary to construct an edited collection, which would comprise an edited version of the locale to be re-presented to community members.

They were asked if they would take part in a sorting exercise, and if they agreed, were then asked to select the best images in the collection and to categorise them. This stage involved a level of researcher input, as many were initially unsure of the categories that could be used and required some encouragement regarding the categories. These were prompted by the phrase ‘Such as new employers, transport, recreation....’.

Potential participants were approached in a variety of locations, as discussed in the previous mobile methods section. However, the nature of the task and the number of images to be considered restricted the locations that could be used.

In Abertillery a pilot sample of eight people was obtained:

Table 2.4: Pilot sample - Abertillery

Location	Number	Estimated age range
Museum	3	All ‘Older’ age range
Library	2	1 ‘Middle’ 1 ‘Younger’
Shop	2	Both ‘Older’
Car park	1	‘Middle’

While eight declined to participate:

Table 2.5: Pilot sample refusals - Abertillery

Location	Number	Reason provided
Arcade (4), Museum (2), Church Street (2)	8	Too many photographs
The Arcade	2	Took longer than expected
Museum	1	Unable to categorise many of the images

A specific number of photographs were repeatedly cited as clearly representative of particular categories, while many of the photographs were discounted due to the angle or distance from which they were taken. Abertillery Rugby Ground was a popular choice and advice was taken regarding obtaining an improved image for inclusion in the final selection.

It was not possible to obtain feedback from all the original pilot participants, but the two that could be re-accessed (in the shop) were asked their opinion of the improved image. The piloting process enabled the collection to be reduced to 36 images. A further image of University of Wales, Newport was added to represent higher education. When asked, the participants of this piloting stage declared the 36 to provide both a good range of photographs of the locale and a manageable number of images to present to those of the main data collection stage.

The instrument was designed with the dual aims of providing images that could be recognised as belonging to the locale, but that would allow for differential interpretation across generations and sex groups. One initial concern had been how to retain the specificity of the categories without them becoming too restrictive, as this would undermine the aim of the photo-elicitation - to elicit *personal* meanings. However, the piloting in Abertillery indicated that, while recognising the place or feature in the photographs, people of different generations elaborated on them in different ways.

Final collection of images

The final selections of thirty-seven 5"x 7" images of each locale were those that had been taken with the target feature prominent. In all cases it either filled the entire photograph or was large enough to be clearly the target feature. An alternative form of image presentation was also used in Ynysawdre, due to the difficulty in locating the facilities to manipulate 37 individual images. This alternative comprised laminated A4 sheets: four pages each containing eight images and one page containing four images, all reduced to approximately 3"x 2½". (List of images: p.35. Actual images: appendices 2 and 3).

Table 2.6: Final categories and related images

Category	Images: Abertillery	Images: Ynysawdre
Local employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Car Emporium ▪ Tillery Valley Foods ▪ Remploy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lloyds TSB ▪ Ford ▪ Brynmenyn Industrial Estate ▪ 'Sofas Direct'
Closed businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boarded-up shop fronts in neglected buildings in the town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Units on industrial estates, Ynysawdre Swimming Pool
New enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kutz and Kurlz ▪ NCG mobile phones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Woof and Go' dog grooming salon ▪ The Tanning Centre
Sites of mining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cwmtillery pithead wheel ▪ Rose Heyworth pithead wheel ▪ Vivian NCB pumping station ▪ Six Bells monument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NCB Training Centre site (2005) ▪ NCB Training Centre (1960s) ▪ Ffaldau Colliery ▪ Ocean Colliery
Old local industry	Mosaics depicting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mining ▪ Metalworking ▪ Brewing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tondy Ironworks ▪ Tondy Brick
Churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St Michaels Church ▪ Ebenezer Baptist Chapel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Llansanffraid Church ▪ Bryn Road Chapel
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Queen Street Primary ▪ Abertillery Comprehensive ▪ Ebbw Vale College ▪ University of Wales Newport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bryncethin Primary ▪ Ynysawdre Comprehensive ▪ Bridgend College ▪ Cardiff University
Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Church Street ▪ The Arcade ▪ Tesco 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ McArthur Glen Retail Outlet ▪ Rank of small shops ▪ Filco supermarket
Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Doll's House public house ▪ The Penndragon public house ▪ Arena nightclub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Royal Oak public house ▪ Sarn Social Club ▪ Odeon Cinema and Food Court (at McArthur Glen Outlet)
Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Abertillery Rugby Ground ▪ Abertillery Sports Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tondy Cricket Club ▪ Aberkenfig Bowls Club
Public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bus station (a row of bus stops) ▪ Mosaic: Former Abertillery Railway Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A local bus ▪ Tondy Railway station
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pigeon lofts ▪ Abertillery Youth Centre ▪ Abertillery Library ▪ Cwmtillery Lakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pandy Park ▪ Ynysawdre Community Centre ▪ Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre and library ▪ Bryngarw Country House / Park
Graffiti	Coloured image plus words 'Shoot to Kill'	Names sprayed in black paint

2.2.7 Design of Instrument no.1 – Semi-structured interview questions

The interview schedule for the photo-elicitation interviews (Appendix 1) contains six distinct sections:

1. Locale
2. Education
3. Aspirations and significant people
4. Background
5. Future participation in education
6. Demographic details

The primary purposes of the interview schedule were to:

- identify dominant social representations of education and work circulating in the locales
- identify how these social representations are connected to the material culture of the locales
- investigate how appropriation of these social representations differs between locales, and between different age and sex groups within a locale.

Although education and work were the main topics of the interview, the range of images presented allowed a level of opportunity for the participants to appropriate those social representations most salient to their lives.

The interview schedule was designed to place varying weighting on the visual images of the physical features of the landscape during the interview. At the outset the collection of images would be the central feature with all questions relating to this.

Though not the direct focus of subsequent sections of the interview, the images would remain on display throughout the interview for use by the interviewee if required

Table 2.7: Summary of interview schedule

Section title	To identify	Example questions
Locale	Social representations of locale	<i>'Would you select the three pictures that you feel most represent your area?'</i>
Education	Connections between material culture and experience of education	<i>'Which of these types of place do you feel has been most important in your life?'</i>
Aspirations and significant people	Social representations of work and the value of education in the two locales	<i>'At what age did you first have a strong idea of what you would do with your life?'</i>
Background	Transmission of social representations of education and work through generations	<i>'What work did your parents and grandparents do?'</i> <i>'What do you think influenced your pathway regarding further education/work?'</i>
Future participation in education	How people use social representations to project their futures	<i>'Do you have any plans to participate in education or training in the future?'</i>
Demographic details	Sample group membership	<i>Sex group</i> <i>Race/ethnicity</i> <i>Age group</i>

2.2.8 Piloting of the interview schedule

Piloting of the photo-elicitation interviews was undertaken in the locales with four people in Abertillery and two in Ynysawdre (due to the difficulty in obtaining participants). In Abertillery, all four were obtained from the library, while in Ynysawdre two people in the Lifelong Learning Centre took part. Other than some minor changes in the wording, all questions remained in the interview schedule, and no additional questions were included. Piloting suggested that:

Section 1 (Locale) questions elicited strong responses during piloting of the interview. However, the varied content of the responses suggested that different people were able to communicate the social representations that were salient to them.

Section 2 (Education) - while some participants answered the questions through talk alone, a number of them continued to use the images to talk about their feelings about education, for example, the man who indicated the mining images to explain why he undertook higher education – ‘to get away from all this’.

Section 3 (Aspirations/People) questions again encouraged use of the images, with many referring to features of the locale to explain where they might have worked, or did or did not want to work. Talk of significant people also initiated reference to the photographs, with reference to generations of families who had obtained work in local industry, factories and shops.

Section four (Background) questions elicited use of social representations of men and women’s work and how these have altered over time. They also identified generational differences. For example, an older woman replied ‘*No need for education, just life isn’t it*’, while a female A level student asserted ‘*I want a nice life, to be able to afford expensive things. I can’t do that without an education*’.

Section five (Future participation) elicited responses that drew the strands of education, work and significant people together. The responses not only related back to earlier appropriation of social representations of education and work by participants, but also social representations of traditional family and gender roles.

2.2.9 Procedure - Instrument no.1

- i. The researcher was either introduced by a gatekeeper, or introduced herself. The purpose of the photo-elicitation interview was introduced
- ii. The researcher explained the ethical issues to the participant and asked permission to record the interview.
- iii. The interview was conducted with interviewer and interviewee seated around a table. The interview began with the interviewee being handed the

collection of photographs and asked to look through them in their own time and then the images were spread across the table.

- iv. Following the final question, the interviewee was asked: *'Is there anything you'd like to talk about some more, or is there something I haven't mentioned that should be mentioned'*
- v. Following completion of the interview the interviewee was thanked and asked if they were satisfied with the interview and if they were agreeable to it being used in the study.
- vi. The interviewer's university contact details were provided.

2.2.10 Design of Instrument no.2 – Eliciting a narrative account

Narrative interviews require an initial 'narrative generative question', which should be designed to both introduce the topic that is of interest to the interviewer and stimulate the interviewee's personal account (Flick, 2002). Thus the question needed to be both specific to the research topic, and sufficiently broad to encourage the production of personal stories.

The initial version of the introductory statement for this study was:

'My project is about people's participation in education and training of all types, and I'm interested to hear about how you've experienced these throughout your life.'

This sentence was piloted with 13 participants (6 Cardiff University PhD students and 7 friends and acquaintances), to determine if it would stimulate a narrative without a consistent use of prompts.

Piloting determined that the generative question was too constraining. This encouraged the limiting of responses to schools attended, school subjects enjoyed, and qualifications achieved. The physical landscape tended to be represented by named education institutions, which were not elaborated upon. The question provided clear guidance but restricted the accounts, with the term 'participation' constraining the narrative content. Information was presented in chronological order, consistent with the temporal pattern of most narratives. However, these comprised relatively unembellished lists rather than stories. As a result, the introductory statement was amended to stimulate a wider range of experiences:

'I'm interested in people's experiences of education, training and learning in general and I'm interested in hearing about your own experiences of these.'

This was designed to provide a much less restrictive stimulus. However, less guidance was expected to result in increased uncertainty on the part of participants regarding how to begin their accounts. Thus planned prompts included *'Start where you like, I'm interested in everything'* and *'I want to hear whatever you have to say, whatever comes to mind'*

The second piloting stage involved five individuals (2 Cardiff PhD students, 3 friends and acquaintances) who had not taken part in the first piloting stage.

The piloting determined that, with the use of careful prompts that could deal with stalling without closing the interview down, all participants were able to begin and sustain a narrative centred on the topic of education, training and learning, and that people were appropriating social representations of their locale to describe and explain aspects of their subjective experiences, including their navigation of transitional periods.

2.2.11 Procedure - Instrument no.2

- i. The researcher was either introduced by a gatekeeper, or introduced herself, and explained the purpose of the interview; to gather the participant's personal story of his/her experiences of education, training and learning.
- ii. Where possible, the researcher sat at a right angle to the participant, with direct face-to-face position avoided.
- iii. The general form of the interview was described, ethical issues were explained to the participant and permission was requested to record the interview.
- iv. The interviewer began with the generative narrative question. If necessary a prompt was used.
- v. When the participant indicated that they had completed their narrative, they were asked if they wished to elaborate on anything they had previously talked about.
- vi. Following completion of the interview each participant was thanked and asked three demographic data questions: sex group, race/ethnicity and age group.
- vii. The participant was asked if they were satisfied with the interview, if they were agreeable to it being used in the study and was provided with the interviewer's university contact details.

2.2.12 Analysis

The requirements of the analysis were to identify major themes in order to:

- Identify commonalities and differences between the two locales
- Recognize changes in the appropriation of social representations across generations
- Identify the ways in which people appropriate symbolic resources to construct a coherent account of their experiences of education and work in their locales

The two instruments produced specific data sets, as they were intended for different purposes. The photo-elicitation strategy comprised an intentionally structured instrument with responses initially stimulated by the photographs – the ‘outside’. In contrast, the unstructured narrative interviews allowed for a ‘free’, unique story to be constructed from personal memory – the ‘inside’. For the purposes of the study, data collected in Abertillery have been used as examples when discussing methods of analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

The data elicited by the photo-elicitation interviews were strongly driven by the instrument itself, and the responses to the questions requiring participants to select and comment upon specific images were analysed in order to determine which of the material features represented by the images were most salient to community members. For example, ‘*Would you select the three pictures that you feel most represent the area in which you live?*’ (Images nominated by four or more respondents) (Table 2.6).

Table 2.8: Descriptive statistics example 1

Number of nominations	Image
8	Abertillery Rugby ground
7	Cwmtillery Lakes
6	Abertillery Comprehensive School
5	Church Street shops Tillery Valley Foods
4	Tesco Doll's House pub

The incorporation of comments from question 2 – ‘*What are the first 5 words that come to mind when you look at these pictures?*’ – provided an insight into both the overriding social representations circulating in the two locales, the relationships between specific material features and specific social representations – which of the images were at the core of a social representation. This also allowed for recognition of co-existing competing social representations maintained by the same physical feature (Table 7).

Table 2.9 Descriptive statistics example 2:

Number of nominations	Image	Represents
8	Abertillery Rugby ground	Pride, Past, Future
7	Cwmtillery Lakes	Beauty, Recreation,
6	Abertillery Comprehensive School	Modern, Future, Qualifications
5	Church Street shops Tillery Valley Foods	Busy, Thriving, Centre Plentiful jobs, Poor jobs
4	Tesco Doll's House pub	Big, national company Socialising, Youthful

2.2.12.1 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

With due consideration of relevant literature, a thematic analysis was undertaken with both data sets in order to identify common themes. The term ‘thematic

analysis' encompasses a wide range of analytical strategies, and is widely employed within the social sciences and psychology. Thematic analysis can be variously employed to identify relevant aspects of data in relation to the specific research question, and provide "some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun and Clark, 2006, p.82). For this analysis the interviews were transcribed and the content of each interview was examined for references to particular themes, both those given to the participants through the interview schedule and those that emerged from the personal accounts.

As previously acknowledged, the sample sub-groups were not equally represented, and it should be noted that identifying thematic changes across time did entail dealing with very small sub-groups. It might be argued that age- and gender-related patterns were particularly heavily influenced by the personal experiences and characteristics of these interviewees. However, the themes themselves arose initially from the analysis of all 29 Abertillery accounts, and the thematic patterns that emerged were compared to the accounts of a further 20 Ynysawdre participants. As can be seen in the 'sample' section, in each locale most sample sub-groups contained participants with a range of employment and marital-related circumstances and educational qualifications. One clear exception was the younger group, which was dominated by A level students, and the limitations of drawing inferences from these accounts are recognised.

A particular strength of the study was its employment of two different interview methods, as accounts elicited through both of these contributed to the bank of themes. The photo-elicitation and unstructured interviews were not designed to elicit the same type of account and indeed, they succeeded in obtaining either 'outside-in' accounts led by the images of local features or 'inside-out' accounts that were not constrained by the researcher. However, the themes that arose during the researcher-led interviews also emerged spontaneously during the free narratives.

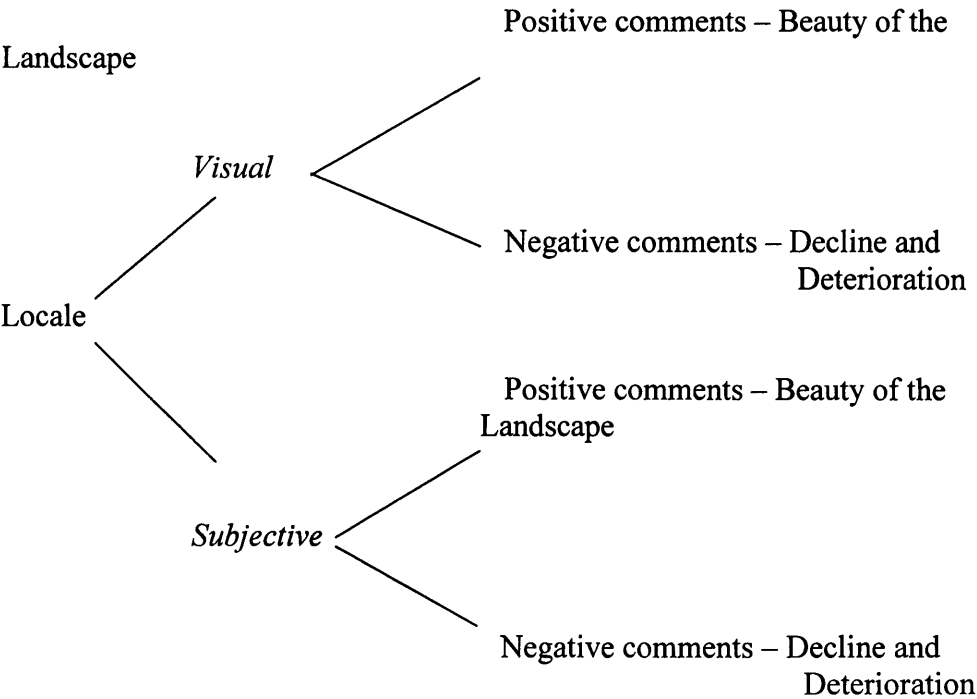
References to common themes were recorded using a card system. Multiple categorizations were used when references were relevant to two or more existing themes, or necessitated the addition of a new theme. Although not strictly the

technique of triangulation, the combination of two very different data sets strengthened the analysis, as the dominant social representations circulating within the locales could be confirmed by both data sets. In this way commonalities and differences between the social representations available in the two locales, and the ways that these were accessed by different groups of people could be identified.

During the first stage of analysis, the responses to each question were firstly considered individually, and then triangulated with responses to questions in other parts of the interview. Those images selected 4 times or more in response to any one question were analysed for patterns regarding age and sex group. The second stage of thematic analysis entailed the identification of sub-themes, primarily to investigate generational and gender differences within a locale. Key themes were analysed with regard to whether these were salient for a particular gender or generation, and whether the salience was communicated through positive or negative comments.

Diagram 2.5: Example: Themes from photo-elicitation interviews - Abertillery

Topic: ‘Locale’ - with level 1 Themes



2.2.12.2 *Narrative analysis*

Approaches to narrative analysis have traditionally been based around Labov's (1972) linguistic framework (Murray, in Camic, Rhodes and Yardley, 2003), one that identifies the structure of a narrative in terms of functional components at the clause level. The identification of core phrases throughout the account allows for recognition of both the core story elements and the narrators' own orientation and interpretation of these. Such approaches have tended to appropriate tools from discourse analysis, which considers the narrative in terms of the context of the discourse, including the ways that narratives differ according to social context (e.g. Labov and Waletzky, 1967). However, they do not adequately focus upon the personal historical and social context that forms the basis of a person's narrative; why an orientation or interpretation may be so salient.

Narrative is an action, forged as a form of social identity (Emerson and Frosh, 2004). Social representations belong to the community and precede identities (Duveen, 2001), thus individuals are born into a socially constructed system of representations. The identities people present through their narratives will be constructed from the symbolic material afforded by their locales over time. Reissman emphasises not only a need for the narrator to maintain control over the story, but also a need for the researcher to allow the culture to 'speak itself' through the narrators words (1993, p.5). While dominant discourses and norms can be seen to underlie narratives, these are usually identified at the wider societal level (e.g. gender norms) and, again do not adequately consider the particular community setting in which the narrator is anchored. In-depth analysis of individual narrative accounts will identify not only those social representations that most strongly underpin an individual's sense-making and sense of identity, but also the very personal ways in which each person draws upon socially shared, and sometimes competing social representations as symbolic resources to deal with transitions, threats and contradictions as they arise in their narrative.

The study initially mapped local culture through a thematic analysis. The themes indicated the dominant social representations circulating in each locale. These can be imagined to form a pool of ideas, common sense theories and resources available in specific locales. Each locale can be viewed as a specific social context, with a distinct history and a particular landscape constituting the space and place. However, individuals drew on this pool of ideas in specific ways as they accounted for their career and educational trajectories. Therefore individuals' accounts were not analysed according to the narrative analysis conventions described above. The analysis was modified to investigate the use of social representation in narrative accounts. The analysis set out to investigate the way specific individuals evoked and used social representations as symbolic resources to make sense of the rupture experienced within communities from individuals' perspectives.

The prompt phrase used to invoke an account was *'My project is about people's participation in education and training of all types, and I'm interested to hear about how you've experienced these throughout your life'*. This elicited rich accounts of people's personal education and work histories within their locale. The narrative analysis took the themes recognised in chapter 4, as a framework from which to investigate individual uses of social representations. Chapter 5 focuses on the account given by two individuals: Richard and Philip. Analysis of the fully transcribed narratives accounts identified *how* they used social representations as symbolic resources to make sense of their life trajectories. It identified the various turning points in each account. Having divided the accounts into sections through the identification of turning points that marks out different phases in life, the analysis then investigated which social representations were invoked to account for and make sense of new and unfamiliar situations, such as starting school, leaving school, entering employment, the closure of the coalmines, redundancy, taking up a new job and retraining. Findings presented in chapter 5 demonstrate that each man selectively drew upon social representations available in their locale and used them as symbolic resources in specific ways to make sense of new situations, resolve tensions and navigate transitions. The analysis demonstrates how locality and the social representations particular to

local communities, as well as culturally available social representations, shape and influence personal stories and hence consciousness.

2.2.13 Reflections

2.2.13.1 Getting to know the locale

I was aware that prior knowledge and expectations can influence later impression formation and that I should attempt to enter the locales with an open mind if I were to begin to gain some sense of the two landscapes and communities. I had previously visited Ynysawdre very briefly on one occasion, but only as a car passenger and had not needed to leave the car. I had never visited Abertillery town, although I can remember passing the car sales business on the outskirts of the locale many years ago. This has been included in the selection of Abertillery photos. Unaware of my future study on the occasions of these encounters, I had paid little attention to either locale. However, I did have a little general knowledge of both Ynysawdre and Abertillery from which I had formed impressions. Ynysawdre was local to the defunct mines in three nearby valleys, and was a manufacturing area with high numbers of furniture, particularly sofa, factories. Abertillery was a former mining town with little else to define it.

My initial visit to Abertillery was to meet someone at the Abertillery and District Museum. This proved an excellent introduction as I was also introduced to three further Abertillery residents and provided with extensive information about the history and geography of the town. This focused and guided my walks and enabled me to make additional useful contacts. One impression I did form on both this first and my subsequent visit was that, while I was welcome to ask questions and was given a tour of the small museum, I was nonetheless an outsider. However, my interest appeared to be appreciated as I was asked to pose for a photograph with the museum curator.

During my walks I encountered and spoke to many local people. Some showed an interest in my photography and note taking, while others waited to be approached by me. I found all to be polite, and almost all were willing to talk about the locale or to answer specific questions, although a few declined to talk. I found the Abertillery community to be extremely cohesive; one meeting could result in any number of introductions to useful contacts, or the telephone numbers or addresses of potential contributors being offered. However, this cohesiveness also made clear a distinction between the three sub-districts within the Abertillery district; Abertillery itself, Cwmtillery and Six Bells. This distinction appeared to be based on the prior location of the collieries, Cwmtillery and Six Bells Collieries and Roseheyworth Colliery in Abertillery, with residents clearly proud of their own contributions to the industry.

The listening and talking stage of the fieldwork involved staying mainly within the town centre itself where community members were more accessible. However, the photography entailed moving further outwards, sometimes along empty lanes, up mountains or across fields. This is when the beauty of the locale became particularly apparent. As an outsider my preconceptions of Abertillery had been a dirty, noisy colliery town, but on these walks I could appreciate the changes in the landscape; the clean air, the green fields of sheep and the forested mountains. It was not until I began interviewing that I realised that what I had been viewing as progress was experienced by some community members as extreme loss and trauma.

By the end of a year of visits I felt I had come to know Abertillery and some of its residents reasonably well. My lasting impression is of a town struggling to forge a new identity through efforts to attract new investment, while also holding on to its proud mining heritage.

I began my visits to Ynysawdre at the Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre, hoping that this would prove to be the springboard that the museum in Abertillery had been. However, although willing to provide a history and description of the centre, staff were unable to introduce me to any useful contacts. One exception was a volunteer on the reception desk, a middle aged man, who was able to offer

suggestions for the photographs I needed for the photo-elicitation stage, such as former mines and local sports clubs. As a taxi driver he was also able to provide directions to these and any other places I needed to visit.

On my walks I found that I had relatively few opportunities to begin spontaneous conversations, as I had done in Abertillery. Whereas people would gather to chat in Abertillery, and were willing to talk to me as a group, the Ynysawdre community members did not form groups for conversation; instead they came and went about their business. Like Abertillery, a distinction emerged between sub-districts. However, unlike that based on the location of the collieries in Abertillery, this distinction was based on socio-economics. Some residents of Tondy declared that although they had attended school in Ynysawdre, they would rarely visit Sarn as they considered it to be too 'rough'. Conversations with Tondy residents suggested that they considered their own sub-district to possess the real history of the locale, due to the location of the Victorian ironworks.

I felt much more of an observer in the Ynysawdre locale than I did in Abertillery; in Ynysawdre I felt strongly that I was being excluded, as people had no time for me, passing me by and declining to talk to me. However, this was probably due to the lack of a true hub for activity, such as a shopping centre. My lasting impression of the Ynysawdre locale is of a much less cohesive community than that found in Abertillery.

2.2.13.2 Accessing participants

Both the piloting stage and the conducting of the photo-elicitation and unstructured interviews were more difficult in the Ynysawdre locale than the Abertillery locale, and in the field this appeared to be due to a less cohesive community spirit in Sarn/Ynysawdre/Tondy locale. Few people seemed willing to make introductions to enlist additional interviewees. However, the notion of a less unified community was later challenged by the content of the interviews undertaken in the two communities.

In Abertillery, initial contact with willing participants was relatively easy to achieve, as community members were generally interested in their locale and eager to tell their stories. In turn these encounters opened doors to networks of potential interviewees, with informants making great effort to contact possible interviewees, make the necessary introductions and persuade their friends and acquaintances to take part in the research. Moving around the locale, and listening and talking with local people provided a strong sense of cohesiveness, particularly among older generations.

However, one sub-group was difficult to gain access to. Younger generation community members who had not continued with their education were extremely resistant to both my own approaches and those of people within the locale acting on my behalf. These young people showed little interest in talking about either their locale or their personal histories. In contrast, approaching members of the public in Ynysawdre became difficult and demoralizing as each potential participant refused to take part. In particular noticeably fewer men appeared available in public places in Ynysawdre.

Another facilitating factor in Abertillery was the number of public places that lent themselves to the conducting of the photo-elicitation interviews. I was allocated space at the museum, the library, a church, a school and two Communities First centres, and at all sites staff members and/or volunteers showed a keen interest in the project and aided in the recruitment of participants. In contrast just two public spaces were suitable in Ynysawdre for the photo-elicitation interviews, the comprehensive school and the Lifelong Learning Centre, and this was a major issue. The school allowed access to the younger generation only, while the Lifelong Learning Centre facilitated introductions to the small sub-group within the locale who used it during the daytime. During the evenings the Centre is a popular location for activities such as bingo, an activity that would not be conducive to the eliciting of narratives. Crucially many community members have never entered the Centre and many of those approached refused to do so for the interviews. The lack of public indoor spaces in Ynysawdre, along with a lack of interest regarding talking about the locale suggested at the time that Ynysawdre was a much less cohesive community than Abertillery. This notion was supported

by the breakdown of networks of potential participants; on four occasions initial introductions failed to achieve consent to interview.

One major difficulty was the recruitment of unemployed young people. This group of people showed little interest in telling their stories, and none of them agreed to take part in the one-to-one interviews. Perhaps a focus group session would have elicited some insight into their understandings of the role of education, their sense of their positioning by the education system, and their experiences and expectations of work.

2.2.13.3 Eliciting accounts

When I was engaging people in talk about their locale, I was struck by their willingness to talk about their lives. Although attempts to recruit participants were not always fruitful, the interviews themselves were extremely rewarding. The interviewees did not need to be persuaded to provide a narrative; they wanted to tell their stories. They also chose to reveal a surprisingly high level of personal information, and although the connection between the interview question and this intimate detail was not always immediately apparent, it became clear as the interviews progressed that the personal meanings attached to their memories of education and work carry with them powerful emotions. Eleven participants across the locales stated at some point during their interview that they were talking about things they would not usually speak of; they were talking of painful experiences, such as physical and mental illness, social and financial problems and relationship problems. Some of the participants in the unstructured interview cohort in Abertillery actually thanked me for listening to them, and two who had spoken explicitly of periods of mental illness expressed a feeling of release at being allowed to speak of very personal negative feelings related to their education experiences and work trajectories.

The way that people responded to requests for them to take part in the interviews emphasised the connection between people's relationships with their locales and

their subjective experiences. The introductory statement elicited narratives that were immediately strongly connected to the physical locale. For example:

“Well, I was born in Bryn Gwyn Road, and uh, my great grandfather had the house built. So there’s my son now in the same house, terrace house, and he’s the fifth generation in that house”

(Mary)

“We very rarely went to school. We’d be, we’d save our dinner money up and we’d be off doing, um, graffiti art on the buildings around town....”

(Peter)

“In those days most boys they left school at 14 and followed their father into one of the collieries because in, when I was growing up in the 30’s there were.... one, two, three, four, five, six, seven working collieries in the Abertillery area ”

(Ron)

“Well I had to...when I went to primary school, and we actually lived on Richmond Road which was, all I had to do was cross the road and I was basically at school. It was really nice ‘cause I could wake up about ten to nine and just roll in.”

(Lucy)

This connection between local physical features and people’s personal lives was further emphasised by conversations with community members during my initial ‘mapping’ fieldwork. When asked to talk about the local area, people would draw from their own personal experiences as they described features, or provided directions. One specific example is David, whose account became a personal narrative and one of the Abertillery unstructured interviews. David was initially approached during the latter stages of the mobile methods ‘getting to know the locale’ stage. However, when he was asked to provide factual information about education institutions and major employers in the locale he switched focus very early in the conversation (line 17 of the entire interview) to begin a spontaneous narrative about his own educational and work experiences. This presented me with an opportunity to record an early unstructured interview:

“Well before that you had the colliery companies, owned it, umm, so it was the NCB then, the National Coal Board. They were the biggest employer, umm, and there were quite a number of mines, too many to remember straight off, but they’re in the book anyway. Umm, it started to decline, but it was still going strong. When I left school I went first of all into the butchers because most parents didn’t want their sons going down

the mine if they could help it, right? So, but the money was pretty, bad, just a butcher boy, an errand boy. I tried ...I wanted to learn a trade, but then I met Polly and got, well, got engaged. We needed more money so I went to work in the mines.....”

When asked about the locale David talks about his own personal story; he tells me about the locale by telling me about his life, positioned by history. What very quickly became apparent was the ease with which the relationship between locale and subjective experience came to the fore; interviewees could not talk of one without evoking the other. The interviews provided a sense of cohesion, of a shared locale, shared lives, memories and history.

During the photo-elicitation interviews participants were asked if they would have included images that were not in the collection. Although some did make suggestions, it very often appeared as though they felt that they should offer suggestions, that it was a requisite element of the task. Those that named or described additional local features did not always enthuse about them or explain why they would have included them, and the impression that this was interpreted by some as a requirement was further enhanced by the apologies some of the participants offered for not being able to make any suggestions.

2.2.13.4 Positioning of researcher

I began this research due to a personal interest in the different relationships people have with education. During my own participation in an Access course, following a long period of illness, I became aware that each of the students on the course had very individual reasons for enrolling. Some wanted to become nurses – general or paediatric - while others were interested in alternative therapies, fostering children, social work, or just hoped to improve their job prospects. I was one of only two who hoped to enter university. Each of us in that cohort carried a personal understanding of our position within the education system, what education should offer us, what we could expect to achieve, and how much effort was necessary to achieve. This experience stayed with me during my first degree and PGCE courses, and I subsequently decided to undertake research into the

relationships people have with education and work, and the roles place and time play in people's understandings of and participation in education.

Due to my own background, I felt that I would be able to empathise with those who had not achieved academic success at school, and also with those who had done so. However, while I felt a connection with a range of interviewees, and these participants did acknowledge that I shared an understanding of certain aspects of their school experiences, I was generally positioned as a person who could not fully understand life in their locales. Such a positioning was reasonably well-founded. Born and raised in Cardiff, I had spent my life in South Wales living either along the coast or the M4 corridor, and I had rarely needed to visit the valleys. My connection with mining had been as a child, watching the coal trains pass through north Cardiff as they travelled from the coalfields to Cardiff Docks, and as a young adult seeing miners collecting money in Cardiff city centre during the strike of 1984. I recognize now that with no personal experience of life in the coalfields, the ex-mining communities I was expecting were very like the mythologized communities presented by heritage centres such as Rhondda Heritage Park and Big Pit. However, while these expectations could have made me receptive to core social representations that supported them, the analysis was undertaken sensitively and rigorously. In-depth analysis of each interview produced the range of key social representations that appeared to be circulating in each locale.

For me, one particularly powerful effect of the interviews was the diverse ways in which I felt the different generations positioned me during the interviews. Through this positioning I was able to learn some of the codes of the community, particularly what was expected of me as a listener, specifically as a non-local, 46-year-old woman. This led to me approaching the interviews with men and women of different ages with personas intended to offer the expected responses to the emerging narratives.

With older participants I felt strongly positioned according to 'time'. This was through a learned script used by these men and women, one in which my role was to express a level of amazement at the lives they had experienced. I learned to

admit that their past world was completely alien to me, to allow each older participant to tell me what it had been like, and to acknowledge that this world had existed, that it had been real but was now accessible only through their memories of it. These men and women would often pause and wait for a verbal and facial reaction to a statement about a lifestyle long past – “*Wow!*” “*Really?*” “*Was it really like that?*” “*I can’t imagine*” - and I found that acknowledgments of my inability to ‘know’ that world encouraged further revelations. This generation all described a massive rupture in the fabric of their lives, resulting in their experience of two very different worlds. In a sense, by ‘asking’ for such a reaction from me they were expecting me to corroborate that the rupture was absolute, and seeking reaffirmation that this past world really was ‘other’.

Although I am of similar age to many of the middle generation interviewees, I nonetheless felt again that I was being positioned during the interviews. However, on these occasions I was not placed according to my age, but to geography. The men and women in this group were able to share certain experiences with an expectation that I could relate to events, trends and popular practices related to the time of our youth. Specifically, I was frequently expected to respond with recognition to references to school practices of the sixties and seventies and to stereotypical school characters. However, the ways that this group provided detailed information suggested that they saw me as an ‘outsider’ from Cardiff who could not ‘know’ the experiences of growing up in a failing mining town, could not imagine what it was like to live through the results of such a rupture.

The younger participants positioned me according to ‘time’, but in a very different way than the older cohort did. These younger men and women inhabit a world of youth culture, and while they were willing to tell me about their experiences and expectations, it became clear during the interviews that I was not expected to know or fully understand their life experiences or their expectations relating to their futures.

2.2.14 Ethical Issues

There were a number of ethical issues to be considered, and the ethical guidelines provided by the British Psychological Society (2005) were followed at all times. Those of the British Sociological Association (2002) were also taken into consideration.

2.2.14.1 Design

The data collection instruments needed to be designed in a way that would encourage participants to talk about their education and training experiences. The wording of the unstructured interview prompt allowed for the omission of any distressing memories or private thoughts if the participant did not wish to share them. The semi-structured interview schedule did guide with regard to themes, but did not pressure participants to answer all questions. Though the interviews were constrained with regard to the focus of the narrative, at no time were participants made to feel that they had to reveal information that they did not wish to.

2.2.14.2 Consent and Confidentiality

Consent to both the interview itself taking place and the audio recording of it was gained. All participants were adults who gave their own consent based on information provided to them before the interview began. The youngest age of participants was sixteen, and where the interviews took place in a school, permission was sought from the institution. All participants were asked to give their consent to the interview being recorded with audio equipment, and told that all recorded material will be kept in a secure, safe place until the project is completed. They were told that following this all computerised recordings and CDs would be stored securely. Potential participants were provided with an assurance of confidentiality and the intended use of pseudonyms in the completed

thesis, along with a reminder that the participant could, at any time end the interview and/or request that their interview not be included in the study.

2.2.14.3 Effects of interview

Research can have positive effects on participants, such as increased self-esteem if they feel that their opinions and stories are valued by the researcher, and in the case of my research a positive effect appeared to be an increased interest in, and elicitation of statements of intention to undertake further education or training. However, one of the major issues of concern regarding this research is that of potential negative effects on the participants. There are a number of concerns regarding potential negative effects that were considered.

Participants may feel that they are being evaluated according to their academic achievement and in some cases this may damage their self-esteem, thus consideration of the amount and kind of personal information given by the researcher was crucial. I described myself as a student interested in experiences of education and dressed in a 'smart casual' manner that would be acceptable in most social circumstances. A further concern was that the topic of the interview necessarily encourages participants to consider any regretful past events or 'wrong' decisions, which could have resulted in a negative outcome for the participant. Additionally, as I was eliciting reminiscences of past school experiences, negative memories were likely to have been evoked, which could have been distressing for the participant. Even though they decided what information to reveal, the interviews necessitated participants think about positive, neutral and negative aspects of their education and work experiences. Many memories might not have been thought about for many years, nor previously disclosed to another person.

For these reasons there was a need to remain aware of the power relations that are involved in interviews and to ensure that participants did not feel compelled to discuss aspects of their pasts that made them feel discomfort or distress. People were entrusting me with sensitive material relating to their identities, and care was

taken to ensure the interviewees were aware of their right to request that information could be retracted and omitted from the transcribed interview

However, even when every precaution was taken, outcomes could not be guaranteed. If an interviewee had become distressed during the interview, it would have been stopped immediately and either cancelled or a new date and time arranged, depending on the feelings of the participant. However, this situation did not arise. The British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines (1997) advise researchers that they should provide contact details for participants, so that during a reasonable time period following participation, respondents are able to contact the researcher if stress, questions or concern related to the research arise. These details were provided by means of 'contact details' cards provided by Cardiff University. I was aware of my responsibility to deal sensitively and professionally with any problems participants experienced as a result of participation in my research. However, none of the participants contacted me.

2.2.14.4 Researcher control of interview

During the piloting stages, the participants were extremely focused on the topic of the study – past experiences of learning – and all remained on topic during the interview. However, it was anticipated that, in the main study there could be occasions when participants digress. If this did occur the decision regarding whether to intervene to bring the participant back to the main story was taken at the time. Although the interviewer should not play too influential a part in another's personal narrative, in some cases it was necessary to sensitively remind the interviewee of the focus of the narrative. However, if it was considered that the digression itself had some relevance to the study, the decision not to intervene was taken.

2.2.14.5 Researcher's role in interviews

The researcher's role in this project will be as an interviewer, and she will make it clear that she is not present to provide counselling or guidance. However, as the subject of post-compulsory education will be raised by the researcher, if asked about further education or training opportunities, it would be appropriate to provide details of those qualified to give information and assistance.

2.2.14.6 Subjectivity and Reflexivity

While narrators use their cultural histories to reconstruct stories, so listeners do so to interpret them. No research is value-free, and all researchers are embedded in the circumstances surrounding the project they are investigating and they affect, and are affected by, their interactions with their participants. Within the theoretical stance of this research it is considered that there is only mediated reality, and, even when interviews are unstructured the researcher contributes to the construction of events and characters through language and discourse. Researchers interpret and re-tell participant's experiences and memories according to their own values and interests, for example certain extracts are necessarily included while others are omitted.

Whether or not the researcher has experience of the topic, they should reveal their subjectivities, for example the preconceptions they hold of the topic and the participants and others involved, along with any special areas of interest. The interviewer's personal values, own reconstructions of representations and personal history can have serious implications regarding planning, questioning, interpretation and reporting. In order to provide as complete an account of the interview as possible, the researcher should also consider the ways in which their own personal characteristics, for example, gender, age, and status may influence the interview interaction.

2.2.15 Conclusion

The methods described here underpin three different planes of analysis. Each of the following three chapters focuses on a different plane. Chapter 4 relies primarily on the responses of participants to the photo-elicitation instrument. This was designed to identify dominant themes in each locale, and to investigate whether or not different groups found meaning in them. The unstructured interviews were also analysed for the presence of themes, but it is the interviews involving the photographs that form the basis of the identified themes. The photo-elicitation interviews involved sections explicitly prompted by the images and also sections that involved questions about the interviewees own background regarding education and work. The photographs were available if required by the participants but not directly used by the interviewer. This level of analysis focuses on the community level, how groups do or do not recognise dominant themes, particularly those relating to education and work.

Chapter 5 moves to the individual level of analysis, specifically how the dominant themes of a locale are taken up by inhabitants and used as *symbolic resources* to serve a purpose during the construction of narratives relating to education and work. To do this the chapter analyses the unstructured accounts of two men, Richard, a 62-year-old ex-miner from Abertillery (older group) and Philip, a 46-year-old ex-NCB worker from Ynysawdre (middle group). Through this in-depth focus upon two men of different ages and from different locales, but with experience of the now defunct coal industry, it investigates which themes they took up and how they used them as symbolic resources in the construction of their personal accounts of their pasts, their present activities, roles and positions, and their imagined futures.

Chapter 6 moves to the third plane of analysis - the structure of social representations in a locale. Social representations have a logic that is anchored in the past. As these align they attract and repel each other according to patterns formed by the features of the locale and its community. The chapter uses both unstructured and photo-elicitation accounts collected in Abertillery, and through the use of emerging metaphors describes the associative links of social

representations, how they align themselves. The stories of three generations of male and female narrators construct a picture of how alignments shift over time as the defining features of the locale change.

Chapter 3: The Locales

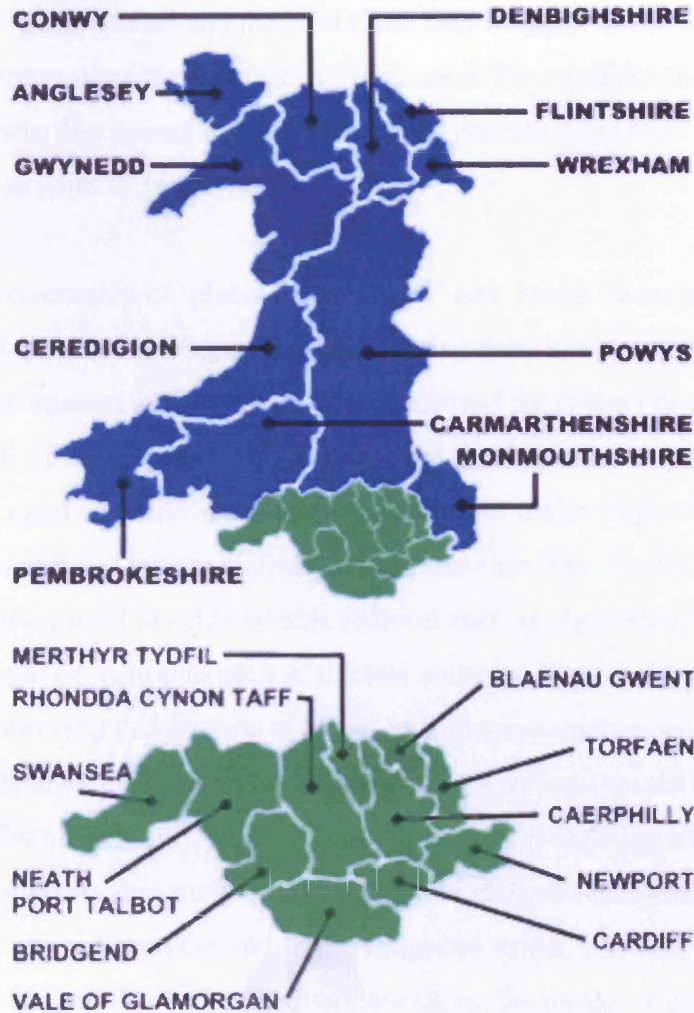


Figure 3.1 Map of Wales showing location of Blaenau Gwent and Bridgend

(Source: http://wales.conservativewomen.org.uk/images/wales_map.jpg)

3.1 Introduction

The following chapter is designed to provide a frame of reference for the study. It does not aim to analyse the collected data, but to provide descriptions of the two locales before presenting the words of the interviewees in the three empirical chapters. The photo-elicitation interviews used images of material features in

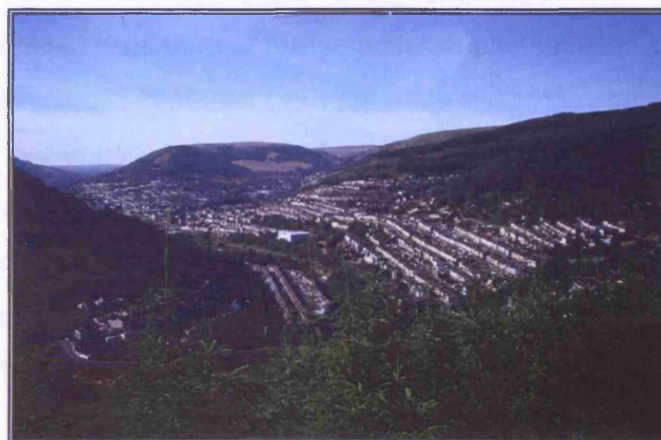
each locale to elicit accounts of experiences of education and work. The study focuses upon the relationships people have with their material, social and symbolic environments. In order to contextualize what people living within a specific locale say about their lives, it is necessary to recognise some of the details relating to the geographical and material place they inhabit. While the subsequent empirical chapters discuss these features in terms of the meanings they carry for individuals, here they are set out descriptively to provide the canvas upon which the participants paint their accounts.

A theoretical discussion of 'place', 'community' and 'locale' is included in the literature review, and this chapter does not re-visit these as theoretical concepts. Neither does it attempt analysis at this stage. Instead the chapter descriptively sets the parameters of each locale through a description of past and current physical characteristics and landmarks, such as roads, schools, major employers, sites of old industry, sport and leisure facilities, shops and churches. Firstly, largely statistical data are used to acknowledge features such as population, health, employment and education in each of the two counties, Blaenau Gwent and Bridgend. Following this a range of historical and contemporary sources are used to provide a detailed description of each locale - *Abertillery* (consisting of Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells) and *Ynysawdre* (consisting of Ynysawdre, Tondu and Sarn). As this study employed mobile methods, elements of the descriptions have not been derived from referenced works, but from the informal accounts of local people encountered while walking the locale, or from the researcher's own impressions during many visits to Abertillery and Ynysawdre.

Abertillery (Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells) in Blaenau Gwent is a geographically distinct area, while Ynysawdre (Ynysawdre, Tondu and Sarn) consists of three small geographically connected communities in Bridgend. Throughout the study, unless otherwise stated these two locales will be referred to as the Abertillery locale and the Ynysawdre locale. While there are many ex-mining communities in South Wales that could have been the focus of this study, Abertillery is a particularly stark example of a mining town reduced by de-industrialisation. During the early part of the twentieth century, Abertillery was the second largest and most prosperous town in its county (History of Abertillery,

Abertillery.net), but this growth and prosperity was built upon the presence of coal, and the locale has been much changed by the decline of heavy industry, including the resultant loss of local businesses and amenities, and changes in landscape due to regeneration. The construction of a by-pass further suggests that Abertillery has become sidelined, when compared with other ex-industrial towns such as Ebbw Vale. Ynysawdre also has a coal-mining past, but this locale contrasts with Abertillery due to the existence of geographical and economic features that have mitigated the loss of the collieries; features such as the adjacent motorway and presence of international manufacturing investment.

3.2 Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells



Photograph 3.1: Abertillery and District
(<http://www.pbase.com/maljohns/abertillery>, 2006)

3.2.1. The Blaenau Gwent area

The unitary authority of Blaenau Gwent is based in two valleys running north of Newport and is encompasses a number of geographically separate areas: Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Brynmawr, Nantyglo/Blaina and Abertillery. Eighty-seven percent of its 'lower level super output areas' (LSOAs) fall within the 50% most deprived in Wales, with 26% falling within the 10% most deprived in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005). Blaenau Gwent suffers above average numbers of LSOAs for overall deprivation, education, employment, health and income, and

below average numbers for environment. In April 2001, the National Census recorded the percentage of people owning their own home in Blaenau Gwent (30.44%) as well below the average for Wales (36.84%), while 35.1% of households in Blaenau Gwent did not own a car or a van, compared to an average of just 26.8% for England and Wales (Office of National Statistics, 2001).

3.2.1.1 Population

The county of Blaenau Gwent experiences a low birth rate and high death rate – one of the lowest and highest respectively in South Wales – and has the highest rate of premature death, particularly for men (www.poverty.org, 2008). Between 1982 and 2002 the population declined by 7.2%, compared with an *increase* of 4.1% for Wales as a whole. This population decrease is contributed to by the substantial out-migration of many young people. In April 2001 the resident population was recorded as 70,064 (99.17% white and 51% female), with a mid 2003 estimate reaching 68,800 (51.3% female) (Office of National Statistics, 2001), though a confirmed figure later than 2001 is not currently available. In 2003, 20% of the resident population of Blaenau Gwent were of retirement age. Blaenau Gwent has one of the highest proportions of girls aged 13 to 15 conceiving a child – approximately 12 per 1,000 (Palmer, MacInnes and Kenway, 2007).

3.2.1.2 Health

In Wales, poor health is the single most frequently stated barrier to work by both men and women with a half of men and a quarter of women giving this as a reason (www.poverty.org, 2008), and in recent years many residents of Blaenau Gwent have been found to be suffering characteristics of social stress and ill-health. In Blaenau Gwent illnesses relating to working in the collieries, the steelworks and Dunlop's semtex works are prevalent, and contribute to the numbers of people permanently unable to work. The number of people reporting limiting long-term illness in Blaenau Gwent is higher than Wales as a whole, which in turn is higher than England. Twelve and a half percent of under 65's claim Disability Living

Allowance, compared to only 5.1% in England and Wales (ONS, 2001), while in August 2003, 7,975 of 16 – 65-year-olds claimed Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance, and of these, 10% were below the age of 30. Of the economically inactive 16-74 yr olds, 13.79% were permanently sick/disabled; nearly double that of England and Wales.

3.2.1.3 Employment

In Wales, the most frequently stated reasons for women not being able to work are poor health, caring responsibilities and childcare. For men, the second most common reason is 'lack of/unsuitable jobs available locally' (23%) (www.poverty.org, 2008), and the percentage of men claiming jobseeker's allowance as at April 2008 was 6.5%, compared to 2.4% of women (Office of national Statistics, 2008). For some time Blaenau Gwent has suffered from high levels of unemployment following the decline of local heavy industry. Though the relatively recent growth of the service sector, specifically the manufacturing industry helped to cushion the sudden drop in employment, the economic change has resulted in a change of living style for those workers involved. This change in employment activity in the South Wales valleys has meant that many local people have often had to experience lower pay and/or longer travelling distances to work. A relatively high number of new manufacturing and service sector jobs have been taken by women (Gorard and Rees, 2002), and many of these women work part-time for low pay in relatively poor conditions, but this employment trend exacerbates the difficulty for local men to replace the well-paid and socially valued employment they once had. In the last decade, a number of the international companies, many of which were drawn to South Wales by financial inducements, have withdrawn, leaving large numbers of local people again seeking paid work.

In 2005, the pattern of employment within Blaenau Gwent was such that 52% of employed residents held positions in the lower third of the employment categories (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1: Socio-economic Classification - Workplace Population (%)

1	Higher managerial and professional occupations	6
1.1	Large employers and higher managerial occupations	3
1.2	Higher professional occupations	2
2	Lower managerial and professional occupations	19
3	Intermediate occupations	9
4	Small employers and own account workers	7
5	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	13
6	Semi-routine occupations	20
7	Routine occupations	19
8	Not classified	2

(Source: Office for National Statistics, 18 April 2005)

In 2004, while 65.8% of economically active Blaenau Gwent residents aged 16+ were in full-time employment the county had the highest unemployment level (7.7%) and the highest percentage of people of working age claiming benefits (4.4%), the second highest level of economic inactivity in Wales (28.6%) (Office for National Statistics – 2005) (Table 3.2). This reflects the ongoing health problems in addition to the decline of employment opportunities in the county. Those who are employed in Blaenau Gwent often have poor quality jobs; in October 2006 around 33% of people in Blaenau Gwent were earning below the national average of £6.50 per hour (New Policy Institute, 2006).

Blaenau Gwent also has the highest number of economically inactive people lacking, but *wanting* paid work (15%), with this a particular problem for older men and for women of all ages (New Policy Institute, 2006). According to the 2001 census, of the people in Blaenau Gwent who were unemployed 16.59% were aged 50 or over, possibly reflecting the legacy of the defunct mining industry. For women, part-time employment is much more common than for men (men 2.44% / women 17.91%).

Table 3.2: Economic activity/inactivity – Blaenau Gwent, 2001

	Blaenau Gwent	Welsh average
Employment	65.8%	70.9%
Unemployment	7.7%	5.5%
Economic inactivity	28.6%	24.9%
People of working age claiming benefits	4.4%	2.3%

(Source: Office for National Statistics, 18 April 2005)

However, the 2001 census indicates that 10.8% of the unemployed population had never worked, which is another sign of the lack of employment opportunities for young people in this region. Indeed, between September 1999 and September 2004 the number of young people aged 18-24 who were claiming work-related benefits reduced by only 4%, compared to a reduction in Britain of 30.7%. In August 2003, 7,625 people in Blaenau Gwent were claiming Income Support, with 3% of these aged under 20 (Office of National Statistics, 2001)

3.2.1.4 Education

The number of people living in Blaenau Gwent who have poor or no qualifications remains considerably higher than both Wales and England and Wales as a whole, dramatically affecting young people's career opportunities. More than 10% of 16 year-olds in Blaenau Gwent failed to sit or attain any GCSEs, and the Blaenau Gwent local authority area has the lowest level of participation in further education in Wales (Office of National Statistics, 2008) - during 2001 only 1.37% of economically active 16-74 yr olds were full-time students, compared to 2.3% for Wales, while only 3.75% of economically *inactive* 16-74 yr olds were students, compared to 5.12% for Wales (Office of National Statistics, 2001).

In Wales during 2004-2005, the proportion of 11-year-olds assessed as failing to achieve level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 was highest in Blaenau Gwent, a figure reaching almost 30% (Welsh Education Statistics, 2006). Although in 2005, 6th form results were seen to be closing the attainment gap between Blaenau Gwent and the Welsh average, Blaenau Gwent still had the lowest average attainment rate (49%) for young people gaining two or more A/As level qualifications at grade A-C (ELWa, 2005). In December 2006, Blaenau Gwent had the highest number of working age adults possessing no qualifications of all 23 Welsh local authority areas and the lowest number of people qualified to NQF level 4 or above (Statistical Releases, National Assembly for Wales, 2008). While the numbers obtaining some kind of higher education qualification increased from 5% in 1991 (Gorard and Rees, 1999) to 9% in 2001 (Office of National Statistics), this figure is still significantly lower than for Wales as a whole (17%) and for England and Wales (almost 20%). In addition, boys in Blaenau Gwent are 3.4 times more likely than girls to leave school without qualifications, compared to an average of 1.5 for Wales (ELWa, 2005), which is particularly worrying as traditional employer-based learning in Blaenau Gwent has reduced in recent decades.

Though relatively recently collaborative partnerships have been arranged to provide young people with opportunities to participate in post-school education and training, (e.g. the Young People's Partnership, 14-19 Learning Pathways and the Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCET)), ELWa continue to expect some logistical and institutional barriers to remain (ELWa, 2005).

3.2.2. The Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells locale



Figure 3.2 Location of Abertillery

(Source: http://www.travelpod.com/cache/city_maps/abertillery-united-kingdom.gif)

Abertillery is a town situated 16 miles northwest of Newport and 5 miles south of Brynmawr in the Ebbw Fach valley. It lies in a narrow section of the valley, with steep mountainsides dominating the views in all directions. Most of the mountain views provide densely treed landscapes, and couple of decades ago the Forestry Commission planted the mountainside to the west, alongside the A467 road, with a huge number of trees. It too is now a densely forested area. These green mountainsides stand in stark contrast to the bald and often black mountains and other land that once existed in many places in Abertillery.

Abertillery fares better than many local areas in terms of deprivation; however, Cwmtillery and Six Bells, both part of Abertillery Urban District are not as fortunate. The Six Bells sub-district is listed as particularly deprived (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005) and it is currently classed as a regeneration area.

Abertillery town has been built on the steep eastern slope of the valley and is located just off the main Newport to Ebbw Vale road (A467) and the town centre itself cannot easily be seen by travellers. Access is also hampered by the relatively narrow roads leading into the town. Adding to its problems is a car parking shortfall, considered to be in the region of 130 spaces (Powell Dobson Report, November 2005). A recent survey of Abertillery for Blaenau Gwent County Council indicates that Abertillery benefits from good road links with larger cities such as Newport and Cardiff (Powell Dobson Report, 2005), although conversation with local people suggests that they do not agree with this finding. Though the new highway has improved access to the town, drivers are impeded by congestion at peak times. An attempt to combat travel problems is the re-opening of a rail link to Newport and Cardiff. However, Abertillery itself will not benefit from the introduction of a railway station; trains will stop at Llanhilleth, approximately three miles away, before continuing to Ebbw Vale.

Originally a small town, the population rose dramatically with the introduction of heavy industry; traditionally coal mining, ironworking and tinsplate working. In 1914 almost eleven thousand three hundred and sixty seven workers worked in the eight local collieries (Phillips, 1982). The coal industry was nationalised in 1947 with the intention of making a huge investment in the South Wales region. However, as a result of economic recession, British Rail's modernisation from steam locomotives to diesel engines and fierce competition from cheap oil imports (Manner, 1964, in Phillips, 1982), the plan was revised. By the 1950s the number of workers in the local mines was drastically reduced, with only five collieries employing 4,464 workers (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Workers employed at collieries in Abertillery locale, 1950

Colliery	Male workers	Female workers	Total
Cwmtilbery	1125		1125
Roseheymworth	631		631
Llanhilleth	682	7	689
Vivian	572		572
Six Bells	1142	5	1147
Total	4452	12	4464

(Source: Phillips, 1982)

As early as the 1930s, the introduction of industrial estates had been considered necessary to attract new industry and counteract high and persistent unemployment (Humphreys, 1972). During the years following the Second World War there was a concerted attempt to reduce the dependence of the South Wales Valleys on heavy industry, and the dramatic changes local people experienced were seen as part of the 'remoulding process' of the employment structure, as this modernisation took place (Humphrys, 1972). By 1979 there remained only Cwmtillery and Roseheyworth Collieries functioning together as Abertillery New Mine and Six Bells Colliery, with employment for only 1,884 workers (Phillips, 1982). More recently, though much investment has been made to forge a new direction towards manufacturing, the continued changing nature of the economic base has resulted in a decrease of almost 17% in manufacturing jobs between 2000 and 2003 alone, with the number of employees decreasing from 7,099 to 5,923.

Today much of the physical structure of old Abertillery dates back to the boom years between 1881 and 1921 (Powell Dobson Report, November 2005).

Abertillery has a traditional town centre with housing spreading out from this.

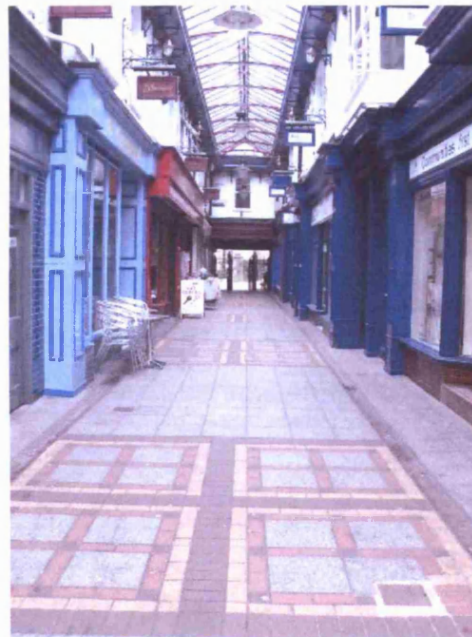
The densely constructed network of streets obstruct a wider view other than the high mountains on either side of the valley, thus it is the buildings themselves that create the visual quality of the town.

3.2.2.1 Town centre

Currently, the town centre is considered to provide a valuable contribution to achieving a sustainable local community, but to portray a poor image, with vacant, derelict and poorly maintained commercial buildings (DTZ report, June 2003). Pedestrian footways are narrow and uneven, and street lighting is poor. The town does not seem to have ever had a civic space, with public spaces limited to streets (Powell Dobson Report, November 2005). Housing in Abertillery is dominated by old terraced properties, which do not attract people from outside the area, and there is limited provision of new housing.



Photograph 3.2: Church Street



Photograph 3.3: The Arcade

Since the rapid decline and ultimate disappearance of heavy industry in Abertillery, the town has received large amounts of European Union Objective One funding (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003; Welsh European Funding Office, 2005). Much of the resulting development of the land and buildings has removed evidence of the industrial past (Abertillery Museum Curator, Personal communication, 19.6.2006). Many of these areas have seen the introduction of new schools, playing fields or industrial estates/business parks. However, despite new investment in the locale important economic and social characteristics have been identified as high unemployment, substantial out-migration, an ageing population and a lack of acceptable activities for young people to engage in.

The general lack of qualifications held by many young people who remain in Abertillery could be expected to restrict employment opportunities, which in turn could result in less spending power and constrained use of the shops in the town. A consequence has been that retailers and employers looking to invest in the valleys have looked elsewhere, and currently the town centre is comprised mainly of locally owned small businesses.

Abertillery centre suffers from a lack of major national retail chains, and this could be due to the attraction of the large, easily accessed Festival Park Retail Outlet at Ebbw Vale, less than nine miles away. The one major national store present is Tesco, which lies adjacent to the A467 outside of the actual town centre, dominating the entrance to the town. However, as it lies on the outskirts of the town at the bottom of a steep slope, shoppers could be encouraged to use cars to access it, which could draw shoppers away from the smaller local shops in the centre. The shopping facilities in local areas considered part of the Abertillery urban district have all but disappeared, with residents in Cwmtillery and Six Bells now relying on the main town centre (personal conversations with residents of Abertillery, Cwmtillery and Six Bells during fieldwork, 2006).

Table 3.4: Classes of use of units in Abertillery town centre.

(n/d = no data provided)

Use class	No. of units 2006	% 2006	No. of units 2003	% 2003	No. of units 2000	% 2000
Shops	52	31%	88	54%	69	57%
Financial and professional	5	21%	n/d	10%	16	13%
Food	25	15%	n/d	15%	13	11%
Business	2	1%	n/d	0%	1	1%
Non-residential institutions	3	%	n/d	0%	1	1%
Dwelling houses	19	12%	n/d	0%	0	0%
Sui generis (e.g. launderettes, taxi hire, theatres)	5	3%	n/d	0%	3	3%
Vacant	19	21%	n/d	22%	17	14%

(Source: Powell Dobson Report, 2005)

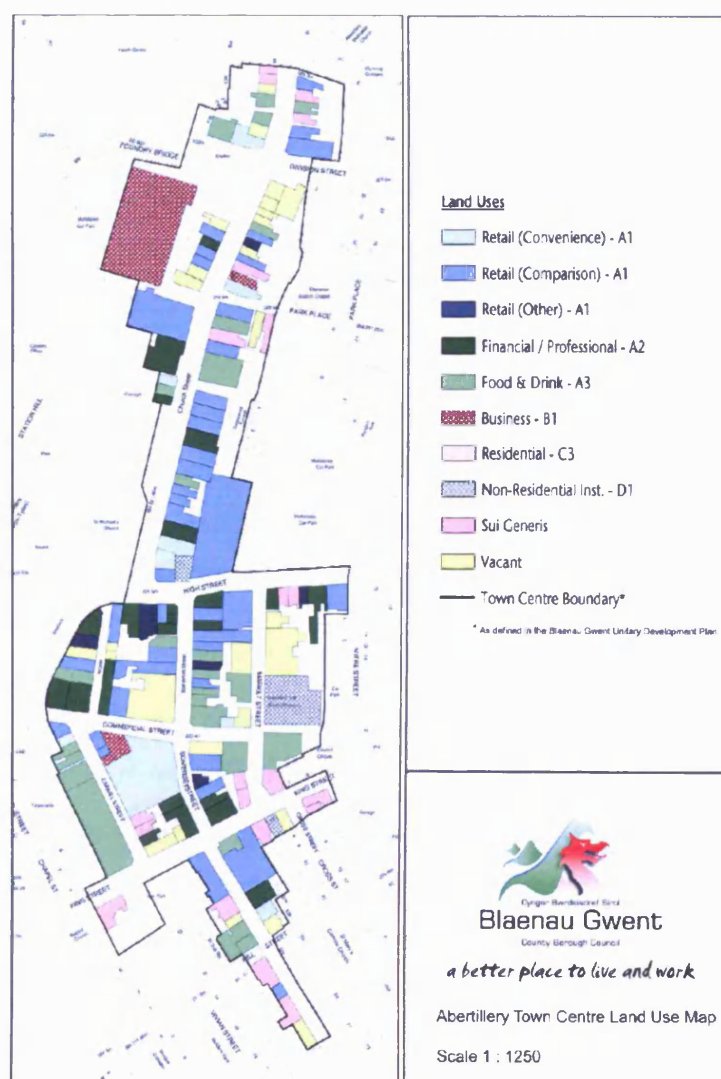
Overall there has been a substantial 23% drop in the number of shops in the town centre over the past three years, accompanied by an 11% rise in business/professional use of units, such as financial services, surveyors and solicitors. In the past six years the centre has also seen a 7% rise in the number of ground floor units left vacant and, of the units which have operating businesses on the ground floor, around 45% of the upper floors are either completely vacant or used for storage only, giving the shopping streets a poor aesthetic quality. There are also a number of social and community facilities in Abertillery town including a youth centre, a number of churches, a library, the Metropole Centre and Museum. However, the youth centre is run-down and appears poorly equipped and the Metropole Centre and Museum had only just been renovated at the end of 2006.

The centre currently suffers from a high percentage of food-orientated business (cafés, pubs and takeaways), with a number of them closed during daytime shopping hours.

The Arena nightclub and the town's pubs attract over a thousand people into the town centre on a typical weekend resulting in commonly seen incidents of unpleasant drunken behaviour (Powell Dobson Report, November 2005).

However, over the last three years 19 buildings have been converted for dwelling use, and while this further reduces the concentration of shopping facilities, it is hoped that this permanent residential use will create a safer environment in the evenings.

Figure 3.3: Abertillery Town Centre Land Use Map, 2006



(Source: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)

St Michael's Church, situated within the shopping district on the corner of Church Street, is playing an increasingly influential role in the town. Re-built in 1898, it is a large and imposing building and opens its doors to the local community, not only for religious purposes, but for general community use, such as coffee morning and 'bring and buy' sales. It is intended that more investment will be made to make the church a true community building, and current hopes are to include conference facilities to raise its profile. The church is currently a popular meeting place for local people, particularly those who are unable to work or to find work.

Abertillery and District Museum, situated in derelict Market Street has undergone considerable renovation and refurbishment following a number of location moves over the past fifteen years. It is currently housed in the ground floor of the recently renovated Metropole Building in Market Street. The museum society itself has been in existence since 1964 and houses archaeological and social historical material relating to the communities of Abertillery, Blaenau Gwent, Cwmtillery, Six Bells, Llanhilleth, Aberbeeg and Brynithel. It represents a valuable local resource not only as an interesting tourist attraction. The volunteers who run the museum society, including a number of miners and their family members, see their role as crucial in order to preserve artefacts and memories relating to the communities' rich industrial heritage and related way of life. It particularly focuses on artefacts and experiences relating to mining in the locale, including the 1984 miner's strike, which affected the entire community, and the final demise of the coal industry. In the words of Frank Olding of the Museum Society:

'The society's work offers a real opportunity for life-long learning and bringing together community groups of all ages. This will help the younger generation to become aware of their heritage and to appreciate and understand the experiences of their elders'

(Olding, 2000, p.2)



Photograph 3.4: The derelict Market Street with the large Metropole Building housing the Museum on the ground floor.



Photograph 3.5: A Women's Support Group Banner - 1984/5 Miners Strike (courtesy of Abertillery and District Museum Society, 2007)

3.2.2.2 *Near to town centre*

Abertillery library is located between the shopping centre and the entrance to the town, on Station Hill near the fire station, and is housed in a relatively modern rectangular building constructed in the 1970s. Originally some of the library windows consisted of stained glass to evoke images of a church or cathedral. However, vandalism resulted in the replacement of these with plain glass. The library serves the local community in a number of diverse ways. In addition to

late opening hours for those using the actual library facilities, all staff have now been trained to undertake a number of additional post office and council office related duties (Assistant librarian at Abertillery Library, personal communication, 14.3.2006). These include the acceptance of council tax payments, housing applications, reports of faults in local amenities, such as street lighting, and even reports of assault and domestic abuse. However, a lack of private rooms and the familiarity of many community members to the library staff must surely impact upon the effectiveness of this facility.

Situated in a lane behind the library is Abertillery Youth Centre, which is open to people of all ages, from youngsters playing pool to pensioners playing indoor bowls. There is also a crèche on the site. However, the premises appear extremely rundown. Older teenagers appear to prefer to frequent the Doll's House, a nearby public house.



Photograph 3.6: Abertillery Youth Centre



Photograph 3.7: The Doll's House

3.2.2.3 A467 road

The section of the A467 from Crumlin to Aberbeeg was constructed between 1981 and 1983, while the Aberbeeg to Abertillery section was completed by 1985 (Abertillery and District Museum Society, 2000). Until this time all traffic access to Abertillery was through Llanhilleth and Six Bells, with the small residential area of Aberbeeg itself relatively isolated. However, the introduction of the new road was designed so that the majority of traffic moving between Newport / Cardiff and the heads of the valleys could travel through Aberbeeg directly to Abertillery town. This can be accessed by a single turning off from the main road. The A467 has improved access to Abertillery town centre and Cwmtillery, particularly useful for the industrial estate situated there. The A467 continues on towards Brynmawr, providing access to Roseheyworth Business Park, situated adjacent to the road just north of the Abertillery turning. One negative outcome of the construction of the A467 appears to be the by-passing of Six Bells. Though the old road remains and is still used by a relatively small amount of traffic, increased use of the new road, along with the later closure of Six Bells Colliery, could have contributed to the reduction of Six Bells to a relatively disadvantaged residential area rather than a busy centre in its own right (fieldwork, July, 2006).

However, though the A467 has improved transport links to surrounding towns and cities and to the M4 motorway to the south, travelling to employment or education outside of Abertillery, even to Ebbw Vale College, just short of nine miles away, remains time consuming for those without the use of a car. Rail travel has not been an option for many decades and journeys by bus can be extremely long. As access to the use of a car in Blaenau Gwent is lower than the Welsh average (Office of National Statistics, 2001), for some unemployment could be a more likely choice than the acceptance of job or training opportunities that involve travelling some distance.

3.2.2.4 Edge of Abertillery town (along A467)

The area along the A467 provided the introduction to the town. Abertillery Tinplate Works stood on Station Road and dominated the entrance to the town for over a century from 1846, and until its closure was a major employer. Adjacent to the tinplate works stood Abertillery railway station, but the last train left the station in 1961 and the site has been filled in and now supports the A467, the entrance road to the town and a car park.

Warwills Foundry was another major employer during the metalworking era. It opened in 1847 on the banks of Tillery Brook alongside Church Street in what is now the main shopping centre, and was well served by the rail link constructed for the neighbouring coal mines. The foundry produced high quality products, such as lamp-post, drain covers, engineering parts for the collieries. Warwill changed hands in 1925 and became Warwill Foundry and Engineering Works. During the second world war it manufactured agricultural machinery and tank parts. Warwill was a successful company employing around 70 people in the foundry and engineering departments. In 1959, the foundry section was moved to the site of the now defunct Abertillery tin plate works, and the building of the new foundry involved the re-cycling of around 180,000 bricks from the tin plate works. In the new foundry, new equipment and cost-effective moulding methods meant that a five-year apprenticeship was no longer necessary for moulders (Abertillery and District Museum Society, 2000).

Both aspects of the business were highly successful and in 1987 were sold to become Abertillery Holdings. A new building was erected in Station Road to house the engineering section. The Church Street site was sold and is now a multi-storey car park. In 1989 Warwill was bought by one of its directors and a general manager who operated it until its takeover by Sycamore Holdings in 1991, at which point Warwill began reporting losses. At a later date Bawn Brothers, who already ran a foundry in nearby Aberbeeg, bought the company and moved all work to Aberbeeg. Warwill was subsequently sold to two former directors and incorporated with Blackwood Engineering, but in approximately 2001, work was moved to Cardiff and the Aberbeeg foundry has closed. For a time following the

move of Warwills Foundry, a relatively small supermarket was located at this prime site, but this has disappeared and Tesco arrived in 2001 (This information relating to Warwill's Foundry was obtained during a personal communication with an ex-metal worker, who had been employed by Warwill for 39 years).

Nearby lies the land that was once the site of the Vivian Colliery which ceased production in 1958. The Vivian pumping station currently operates on part of the old colliery site. During the 1970s Abertillery Leisure Centre was built on part of the site, but following the construction of the larger and more modern leisure centre in Cwmtillery, this building now has other uses. For a time there were small factories on or near the site manufacturing cash registers and soft toys (Abertillery Museum Curator, personal communication, 19.6.2006). However, much of the land now lies vacant.



Photograph 3.8 : Part of the abandoned site of the Vivian Colliery

3.2.2.5 Other side of A467

Close to Tesco is the subway which provides access to a small number of homes, businesses and leisure facilities on the other side of the A 467. The subway is completely covered in rich mosaic images representing the town's past, including brewing, mining, metal working and the railway. These were created by Kenneth and Oliver Budd, a London father and son team during the 1980s and in the latter

half of 2006 were restored by the son (Communities First Officer who arranged restoration by Oliver Budd, personal communication, 21.7.2006).



Photograph 3.9: Mosaics in Abertillery subway

Located just on the other side of the A467 is The Railway public house, originally situated next to the railway station. Opposite the pub on the site of the long gone Empress Theatre was the original location of the Empress Car Company. This business proved hugely successful and in the early 1980s moved to larger premises in Aberbeeg, leaving the site empty (personal communication, local resident, 18 February, 2006). Empress Car Company took over the site previously owned by Jones Bus Company of Aberbeeg. This bus company had, until 1969 ferried large numbers of Abertillery men from dawn until after midnight to and from their shifts at Ebbw Vale Steelworks and the Dunlop Semtex factory at Brynmawr, which at one time employed many thousands of workers (cwmtiltillery.com). The Empress Car Company has since been re-named The Car Emporium.

Accessed by road or on foot via the subway running under the A467 is The Park, which consists of a rugby ground with stand and terraces, the cricket ground and a bowling green. Abertillery Rugby Club was for many years a hugely successful club, attracting major national teams, such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. At one time the club was attracting as many as 22,000-23,000 spectators, many of them families from Abertillery, along with residents of nearby communities, such as Ebbw Vale and Nantyglo (personal communication with

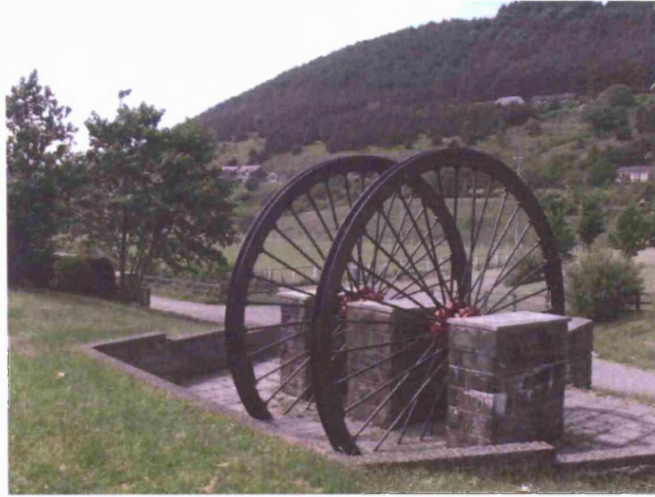
assistant librarian at Abertillery Library, previously a volunteer with Abertillery Rugby Club, 14 March 2006). This influx of people on match days meant hugely inflated takings for the pubs and shops of Abertillery. Thus for both sporting and economic reasons, The Park and Abertillery Rugby Club were major focal points for the people of the town. However, in the late 1990s, while in division two, the club ceased operating for legal reasons which resulted in the loss of many of its key players. In 2002, with these issues resolved, Abertillery Rugby Club re-formed and, due to the ruling of the Welsh Rugby Union, has begun to seek success from its starting point in the lowest division. In recent years the ground has also played host to local football fixtures, which has helped it maintain its standing as a focus for local sporting events.

The cricket ground has also served to pull the community together; until just a few years ago it hosted local six-a-side knockout matches that lasted over long weekends.

3.2.2.6 Cwmtillery/Penybont area



Photograph 3.10: Cwmtillery Colliery in 1966
(Photograph courtesy of www.cwmtillery.com)



Photograph 3.11: The colliery site today.

Until the mid-1980s the Cwmtillery area was dominated by the mining industry and in particular Cwmtillery Colliery, which was first sunk in 1850. Ten years later and about a quarter of a mile away Penybont Colliery was sunk, which was only about 300 yards away from the already existing Gray Colliery. Though Penybont closed in the late 1920s, Gray continued until 1948, albeit from 1938 as a training colliery for local miners. Thus it was Cwmtillery Colliery itself that remained the only commercially functioning mine in Cwmtillery. In 1956 Cwmtillery Colliery was integrated with Roseheyworth Colliery and in 1960, at a cost of approximately £3 million, they were fully merged and re-named Abertillery New Mine, a name that suggested a fresh future for the town. However, Cwmtillery section of Abertillery New Mine was closed in 1982. Resources were moved to the adjoining Rose Heyworth section, with just two workers remaining at Cwmtillery to operate the ventilation system needed by those in Roseheyworth. At the time that Cwmtillery Colliery finally came to a complete stop, 26 miles of underground tunnels and roadways remained, along with machinery considered too uneconomical to recover (Phillips, 1982).

A quote taken from a contributor to the locally run Cwmtillery website:

"The Colliery was closed 1982 and this marked the end of an era. Almost every family in Cwmtillery had some link with it, as son, father and grandfather had worked at the pit at some time over the years. The colliery was part of the community. Once you had worked there you were a friend of everybody. The most

important thing in the closure of the colliery is the loss to the community of the friendship it created over the years. It's like parting with one of the family."

(www.cwmtillery.com, 2007)

Following the closure of the last of the three mines, the area underwent restructuring and re-landscaping. During the last years of the 1980s, Cwmtillery Lake, which had originally functioned as a feeder lake for the pit-head baths at Cwmtillery Colliery, was cleaned and reduced in size, and the land surrounding it was re-landscaped to create an attractive open access area comprising fourteen acres of countryside and lakes for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2007).



Photograph 3.12: One of Cwmtillery Lakes

The actual sites of the mines and many Cwmtillery homes were buried when that section of the valley was filled in and built upon – *“Large earth scrapers moved in and would spend the next 12 months travelling up and down the valley moving the black mountains which scarred the valley. Bull dozers and cranes slowly but surely filled in the valley between the two lakes and the site of the Cwmtillery colliery.”* (Cwmtillery.com., 18.12.05) On the Cwmtillery site now stands a sports ground and Cwmtillery Industrial Estate. This was opened in September 1986, and was the first industrial estate in the immediate locale. Cwmtillery Industrial Estate connects relatively seamlessly with the town itself, as it is situated next to the new sports centre which shares grounds with Abertillery

Comprehensive. One of the Cwmtillery pithead wheels has been set in stone next to Abertillery Comprehensive School to mark the sight of the former colliery (Cwmtillery.com., 18 December 2005). Walking the estate suggests that many units on the estate are used by local businesses, including a double glazing manufacturer, a housing repair company, two furniture manufacturing companies and a mobile computer repair business. Cwmtillery Industrial estate contains 21 units, has 11 businesses operating and has no units currently vacant, and though it has only one unit more than Roseheyworth Business Park, in terms of size it is considerably larger (Information provided by email by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2006). Cwmtillery Industrial estate currently houses the two largest local employers – Tillery Valley Foods and Remploy, along with a large Royal Mail sorting office and a social services department (fieldwork, April, 2006). Tillery Valley Foods has operated in Cwmtillery since the industrial estate opened. It is a major supplier of chilled and frozen prepared meals to hospitals throughout the British mainland, and delivers nationally via their own fleet of vehicles (Tillery Valley Foods website, 2006). Though originally in local ownership, the company now belongs to a large conglomerate. The building was recently extended and local people estimate that around 600 workers are currently employed there. However, no official figure is forthcoming.

Remploy has been operating in Abertillery since 1949, and currently employs approximately 62 disabled people in its factory producing electronic components for Panasonic and other electronics companies (Graham Jones, manager Remploy Abertillery, personal communication, 2 February 2006). They also produce automotive components though much of this work has been moved to another of its factories. Remploy currently have 12 factories in Wales, contributing to its UK total of 82. The company also operates an 'Interwork' programme, which helps to introduce disabled people to employment with major employers such as Marks and Spencer, ASDA, Tesco and CCTV companies. Nationally, 4,500 disabled people have found work through Interwork (Graham Jones, manager Remploy Abertillery, personal communication, 2 February 2006). Originally based near Abertillery Park, Remploy's move to the much larger Cwmtillery premises in 2004 followed the demise of the previous users, Medallion Upholstery and the subsequent failure of a number of small manufacturing companies who set up

smaller units on the premises. After substantial refurbishment, the entire lower floor of the large building is home to Remploy, while Global Laser Technology is located on the upper floor.



Photograph 3.13: The Remploy premises on Cwmtillery Industrial Estate

Further towards the town centre, on the now buried site of the old Penybont mine lies a sports centre with sports grounds and Abertillery Comprehensive School, both constructed during the 1980s.

3.2.2.7 Roseheyworth area

Following the closure of the Cwmtillery section of Abertillery New Mine a further £2 million was invested at Roseheyworth to save that section of the mine.

However, it was completely closed in 1985, just three years after Cwmtillery. The colliery was replaced by the clean and modern Roseheyworth Business Park, which was constructed, using Objective One funding, in two phases on part of the site of Roseheyworth Colliery (Welsh European Funding Office, 2005). Phase one, completed in 1992 was intended to create 4 units to encourage new investment into the area. With 106 new jobs originally estimated it was hoped that the development would strengthen the economic base of the locale. Phase two opened in 2004, adding a further 2,400 sq metres of business accommodation

to the existing 3,200 sq metres, and at the time, was considered to offer an additional 72 local jobs (Welsh European Funding Office, 2005).



Photograph 3.14: Roseheyworth Business Park with old pithead wheel in foreground

The business park is accessed from the A467 slightly to the north of Abertillery. Phase 1 of the development was completed and opened in 1992 and phase 2 followed in 2004. Prominently displayed in the grounds of the business park is one of the pit head wheels from the mine, one of the few official reminders of the town's mining history. It currently consists of twenty units, mainly operated by small manufacturing companies (for example, sofas, air conditioning units and electrical distributors) with 10 businesses operating and five vacant units. The remainder of the site is now home to a large playing field and Roseheyworth Millennium Primary School, which opened in September 2000 at the top end of the playing field (see 'Schools' section).

3.2.2.8 Six Bells area

Until 1988 Six Bells Colliery dominated the landscape and lives of local people. On the 28th June, 1960 an explosion caused by fire damp in the west district of the Old Coal Seam claimed the lives of 45 out of 48 miners. Following the

investigation the mine continued to operate and many local men continued to work there. Since the closure of Six Bells Colliery the site has been reclaimed; filled in and landscaped to blend with the surrounding area of natural beauty.



Photograph 3.15: In the foreground is the monument to the dead miners of the 1960 Six Bells Colliery explosion, with the re-landscaped site of the colliery alongside the road in the background (2006).

However, with the loss of the mine the Six Bells residential area has suffered. Shops and public houses have closed, creating vacant, neglected buildings. The Coach and Horses public house, located opposite the Six Bells Colliery used to be a hub of activity as the stopping-off point for miners on their way home after working their shift. However, today it is boarded up and neglected.



Photograph 3.16: The now derelict Coach and Horses Public House.

Currently there are few shops remaining, only one public house and few major employment opportunities in the immediate Six Bells locality. One particular area immediately adjacent to the site of the mine and once a hub of activity has become a regeneration area with high unemployment and continued high levels of illiteracy (Mair Sheen, Communities First Co-ordinator, personal communication, August 2006).

3.2.2.9 Schools

The school system in Abertillery and district has undergone a number of changes over the past forty years, with the most recent changes taking place in 2000. Until the early 1970s children in Abertillery were segregated into either the grammar school or the secondary modern. After this time both schools became junior comprehensives teaching children from the age of eleven to sixteen. However, both schools closed when the new comprehensive school was opened in Abertillery in 1986. Currently Abertillery has one comprehensive school and six primary schools. Much of the historical information about schools in the Abertillery locale was provided by a retired headmaster who has lived in Abertillery all his life and spent his entire teaching career in the locale.

Abertillery Comprehensive School stands on part of the site of Penybont and Gray Collieries in Cwmtillery and acknowledges this with the location of a colliery pithead wheel in its grounds; the school motto is '*A wheel of opportunity for a world of individuals*'. Prior to the building of the new Abertillery Comprehensive School and its opening in 1986, Abertillery had been the only local town not to have its own age 11 – 16 secondary level school. During this time, children attended either Roseheyworth Junior Comprehensive or Gelli Crug Junior Comprehensive until the age of fourteen, at which time they transferred to Nantyglo Comprehensive four miles away. Nantyglo Comprehensive had been built as a 'showcase' school at great expense and would have been underused had the children of Abertillery not been on its roll. However, the new Abertillery Comprehensive School currently educates students up to the age of sixteen; for AS and A level study, students need to attend Brynmawr Comprehensive School approximately five and a half miles north. In September 2003 Abertillery Comprehensive had 921 students on its roll with projected figures indicating a future drop by around 150 (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2003).

The original Roseheyworth School had been built in the early 1900s as the County School. This subsequently became Roseheyworth Grammar School, which itself was changed to Roseheyworth Junior Comprehensive in the early 1970s. In 1986 when it was closed in favour of Abertillery Comprehensive the building was razed

to the ground. The Gelli Crug Junior Comprehensive building became the home of Abertillery Primary School.



Photograph 3.17: Abertillery Comprehensive School – main entrance



Photograph 3.18: Abertillery Comprehensive School – side view showing pithead wheel

Abertillery Primary School serves the top end of Abertillery. Its original building first opened in 1854 and some time was known as the ‘British School’, as it was

partly funded by the British Bible Society. In 1960 the local authority changed the name to Abertillery Junior Mixed School, but local people have continued to refer to the school as 'the British'. By 1987 the building was considered totally inadequate for purpose, and the school was moved into the now empty Gelli Crug Secondary Modern and Gelli Crug Infants Schools buildings. The original building was demolished and a residential home for elderly people has been constructed on the site. Gelli Crug Secondary Modern had become a junior comprehensive school serving 11 – 14 year olds, which was closed in 1987 following the opening of Abertillery Comprehensive, and Gelli Crug Infants School had moved into a new building on the same site, with the two primary schools separated by a wall. In 1989, on the retirement of the head teacher of Gelli Crug Primary School, this school was incorporated into Abertillery Primary School. The school is currently located very near to Abertillery Comprehensive School. In 2003 the school had 381 children on its roll (BGCBC, 2003).

Queen Street Primary School is one of the oldest schools in Abertillery, serving the centre of Abertillery. Constructed of the stone that is typical of old buildings in the valleys, it is situated near to the town centre. In 2003 there were 147 students on its roll (BGCBC, 2003), with 32% of these registered for free school meals (Estyn, 2003); a figure above the average for Wales. The 2003 Estyn report indicates that Queen Street School has 'a few' children of ethnic background, but that all the students speak English as their first language. The Estyn assessment found that all observed lessons were considered satisfactory or above, but unlike other schools in the locale, Queen Street School had no policy for forging partnerships with local industry and had no business sponsorship.



Photograph 3.19: Queen Street Primary School

Bryngwyn Infants and Junior School lies within the community of Six Bells, and was created in 1969 from the original Victorian Bryngwyn Secondary School. It was created to take children from the area previously served by Six Bells Infants and Six Bells Junior Schools. The mountain location of Six Bells Infants (known locally as the ‘*mountain school*’) had long created difficulties for children attending it, particularly in poor weather conditions and the building was abandoned. The junior school was located opposite the still existing Six Bells public house and has now been converted into small workshops. Unlike many other schools in the valleys, the number of students enrolled in Bryngwyn rose between 1997 and 2002 to 222 pupils, but in line with the general trend has subsequently begun to drop (BGCBC, 2003). However, also falling is the number of students in Bryngwyn School who are registered for free school meals. Estyn has evaluated the school as an ‘effective’ school with satisfactory links with local industry, and playing a significant role in the local community through sporting, musical and charitable activities (Estyn, 2002).

The original *Blaentillery Primary School*, in Cwmtillery burned down in the mid 1950s with the children subsequently attending Abertillery Primary School. It was not until the 1970s that an infant’s school was re-established in Blaentillery, and it was only due to pressure from local residents that a junior school was re-established in the site in the late 1990s. In 2003, 105 students were enrolled

(BGCBC, 2003) and approximately 30% of its students were registered for free school meals (Estyn, 2003). The school is recorded as having a satisfactory partnership with local industry and also enjoys a good relationship with the local St Paul's Church, with frequent visits by the vicar for school worship assemblies (Estyn, 2003).

Roseheyworth Millennium Primary School primarily serves the north of the Abertillery community. It was opened in 2000 for children who had previously attended Cwmtillery Junior School and Blaenau Gwent Infants School; both of which were closed completely at that time. It is situated on part of the site of Roseheyworth Colliery, sharing the site with a playing field and Roseheyworth Business Park. The school has developed strong relationships with local industry to enable children to learn about the employment opportunities in their locale. The school arranges for the children to visit local companies and for local business people to visit the school. Roseheyworth School also enjoys sponsorship from local companies, such as school uniforms from a supermarket and sports equipment from a building company. Roseheyworth Millennium School had 181 students in 2003, but with a projected slight drop in numbers by 2008 (BGCBC, 2003).



Photograph 3.20: Millennium School Roseheyworth
(Photograph courtesy of: <http://www.cwmtillery.com>)

3.2.2.10 The local college

The nearest college to the Abertillery locale is Ebbw Vale College, part of Coleg Gwent. This offers a large range of full- and part-time academic and vocational courses.

3.2.2.11 Nearest University

The nearest university to the locale is the University of Wales, Newport, which has campuses in Caerleon and Allt-yr-yn, Newport.

3.2.2.13 Training

During the dominance of heavy industry, skills-training was the norm. Training for work in the collieries was essential, whether it be engineering, electrical or fire officer courses involving college attendance or the in-house training given to the miners working the coalface. Informal talks with two Working Links placement officers, (personal communications, 9 March 2007) and local people during the fieldwork suggest that at that time young men could project a future for themselves that involved training for their specific job and any lack of enthusiasm for academic schooling was supported by the availability of opportunity at that time. Conversations with local residents suggested that there had been a number of apprenticeships available for trades such as carpentry, building, blacksmithing, cart and wheel making and metal working, all directly or indirectly relating to the heavy industrial heritage of the locale. However, in the recent past, the number of people undertaking job-related training has dropped, as local employers require workers who already possess relevant skills, resulting in young people who could benefit from job-training becoming overlooked (Working Links placement officer, 9 March 2007).

Working Links, an organisation dedicated to getting the long-term unemployed back to work, reports that young people in Abertillery today have extremely limited opportunities with regard to both training and employment (Working Links placement officer, personal communication, 9 March 2007). Although manufacturing is the dominant source of employment in Blaenau Gwent, young people in Abertillery are resistant to working on production lines. Many young men are enrolling on courses in car mechanics and construction, particularly the CSCS safety certificate for the building trade. However, since the loss of heavy industry and the subsequent decline of the area, there has been a lack of opportunities in the building trade. Further, as Blaenau Gwent has such a relatively low level of car ownership, due to low levels of qualified drivers, opportunities in the automotive mechanics trade are limited. Work in the construction industry also suffers as a result of low numbers of drivers, as employees need to be able to travel to new building sites on a regular basis.

Additional problems include the contradictions between government strategies, such as the push to involve young people in training courses, and the stopping of benefits if a student attends college for more than 15 hours per week. Thus those who do attempt to arm themselves with the skills to enter the workforce can experience financial difficulties and can even be forced out of training courses. According to one experienced representative of Working Links, 'modern apprenticeships are seen as a joke', as employers often cannot be found to train young people after they have passed the initial stages of the programme (personal communication, 9 March 2007).

According to an officer at Working Links, there has also been some manipulation of the system by less than scrupulous employers who refuse to pay apprentices in addition to the £45 a week they receive from the Modern Apprenticeship programme, and when this period of payment ends the apprentices are dismissed (Working Links placement officer, personal communication, 9 March 2007). All these elements are seen to undermine young people's enthusiasm for training in Abertillery.

During the mining era, even though many earned a good lifestyle without formal qualifications, education was nonetheless recognised as the route to respected professions. Abertillery Miner's Institute, like most in other colliery towns, was a strong focal point for the town and supported learning (Museum Curator, personal communication, 18 October 2006). However, following the provision of secondary schooling and local library facilities, the institutes became less required.

3.2.2.14 Employment

Since the cessation of mining and steel working in and around Abertillery, the move from education into employment has been much less predictable. Until the 1960s it was possible to leave school on the Friday and take up employment with a colliery the following Monday, as the older participants of the study and other Abertillery residents attested. For miners, full training was provided over a sixteen week period at the colliery training centre in Crumlin, just over four and a half miles away (Information provided by Abertillery and District Museum during visit, 27 October 2006). Equally accessible were the steelworks in Ebbw Vale and the Dunlop Semtex works in Brynmawr, with bus services from 5a.m. until after midnight to suit workers on all shifts. It was not necessary for people to learn to drive in these days and the legacy today is the high number of local people that neither hold a driver's licence nor own a car, with this proving an additional stumbling block for the newly unemployed following the rapid crumbling of the foundation that was heavy industry (Information provided by Abertillery and District Museum during visit, 2006). Moving permanently out of the valleys to areas that can provide work can be a further problem due to the comparatively high price of housing in more prosperous areas. In 2003 the town of Abertillery was identified by the Halifax Building Society as the cheapest place to buy property in the UK (news.bbc.co.uk), while in 2005 a Guardian property survey noted that Abertillery was the sixth cheapest area for housing in Britain (Guardian Unlimited, Monday April 25, 2005).

During the more prosperous period in the town, employment for women was relatively easy to attain, but restricted in scope. For those attending grammar

school, teaching was the main career option, with clerical work popular for those intending to work for a short time before marrying and starting a family. Those who were less able to achieve academically could usually expect to choose from shop work or factory work, often operating sewing machines in clothing factories.

More recently the ease with which young people were able to step into a well-paid local job without the need for academic qualifications has disappeared. Between June 1951 and March 1982 the percentage of unemployed people in Abertillery rose dramatically from 3.5% to 17% (Abertillery Job Centre, in Phillips, 1982) and though new enterprise has been attracted to the locale, the number and type of job available is highly inferior to those previously on offer. With the closure of the industries, many related jobs and small businesses have disappeared. One constant has been the presence of factories, though these do not offer jobs with anything like the pay or status that can satisfy most ex-miners.

Tillery Valley Foods, situated on Cwmtillery Industrial Estate appears to be one of the largest employers in the town and is situated on Cwmtillery Industrial Estate. According to many local reports it has a rapid turnover of staff although, like many companies does not reveal staff numbers. However, even though factories are a major source of employment here, many factories in this locality, including Tillery Valley Foods do not employ people aged under 18 for insurance reasons, thereby reducing the employment opportunities for young school leavers with few, or no qualifications.

3.2.2.15 Timeline: Abertillery Schools

1950s

Mid 1950s - Blaentillery Infants and Junior School burned down – most children then attended Abertillery Primary

1960s

1969 - Six Bells Infants School closed

1969 - Six Bells Junior School closed

1969 - Bryngwyn Secondary Modern becomes Bryngwyn Primary School

1970s

Early 1970s - Roseheyworth Junior Comprehensive closed and building razed to the ground

1970s - Gelli Crug Infants School closed – new infant's school built on same site

1970s - Blaentillery Infants School re-established

1980s

1986 - Roseheyworth Grammar School (previously the *County School*) closed

1986 - Gelli Crug Junior Comprehensive closed

1986 - Abertillery Comprehensive opened

1987 – Abertillery Primary School moved to site of Gelli Crug Secondary Modern and Infants Schools

1989 – Gelli Crug Infants incorporated into Abertillery Primary

1990s

1991 - Gelli Crug Infants School and Abertillery Primary (Also known as the *British School*) merge to become Abertillery Primary School on adjoining sites of Gelli Crug Infants School and Gelli Crug Junior Comprehensive

Late 1990s - Blaentillery Junior School re-established

2000s

2000 - Cwmtillery Junior School (*Cock and Chick*) closed

2000 - Blaenau Gwent Infants (*Crown*) School closed

2000 - Roseheyworth Primary School opened

2003 - Arrael Primary School Six Bells closed

Current schools serving Abertillery students

Abertillery Comprehensive School (11 – 16 years)

Brynmawr Comprehensive School (out of area) (16 – 18 years)

Abertillery Primary (3 – 11 years)

Blaentillery Infants	(3 – 11 years)
Bryngwyn Primary	(3 – 11 years)
Queen Street Primary	(3 – 11 years)
Roseheyworth Millennium Primary School	(3 – 11 years)

3.2.2.16 Timeline: Abertillery Locale

1930s

- 1931 - Woolworths opened
- 1936 - Lido built at Six Bells
- 1938 - Penybont Colliery closed except for training purposes
- 1938 - Gray Colliery closed
- 1938 - Ebbw Vale Steelworks and Mills re-opened

1940s

- 1946 - Llanhilleth Colliery No. 1 closed
- 1948 - Penybont Colliery closed
- 1949 - Remploy factory opened at Bridge Road Abertillery

1950s

- 1950 - South Griffin Colliery No. 3 closed
- 1956 - Cwmtillery and Roseheyworth Collieries integrated
- 1957 - Abertillery Tinsplate Works closed
- 1957 - Warwills Foundry and Engineering Work moved to site of tinsplate works
- 1958 - Vivian Colliery closed
- 1950s - Closure of theatres – Metropole, Gaiety, Empress, Pavilion

1960s

- 1960 - Cwmtillery and Roseheyworth Collieries merged – re-named Abertillery New Mine
- 1960 - Six Bells pit explosion June 28th - 45 men killed
- 1961 - Abertillery Railway Station closed
- 1963 - Rail link – Brynmawr to Nantyglo closed 4th November
- 1964 - Abertillery and District Museum Society formed
- 1965 - Aberbeeg South Colliery closed
- 1966 - Crumlin Viaduct closed
- 1967 - Navigation Colliery (Crumlin) closed
- 1968/9 - Bryngwyn Secondary Modern becomes Bryngwyn Primary School
- 1969 - Llanhilleth Colliery No. 2 closed

1970s

- 1970s - Palace Theatre closed – became bingo hall
- 1973 - Rail link - Nantyglo to North Blaina - closed 29th October
- 1976 - Rail link – Blaina to Roseheyworth – closed 5th July

1980s

- 1983 - New road (Crumlin to Aberbeeg) completed
- 1982 - Cwmtillery Colliery closed
- 1985 - A467 (Aberbeeg to Abertillery section) completed
- 1985 - Roseheyworth Colliery closed
- 1987 - Warwills Foundry and Engineering works sold to Abertillery Holdings
- 1988 - Mosaics created in subway beneath main road
- 1988 - Webb's Brewery closed
- 1988 - Six Bells Colliery (Arrael Griffin Nos. 4 & 5) closed
- 1989 - Warwills Foundry Engineering sold

1990s

- 1990s - Cwmtillery Lakes reduced in size and landscaped
- 1991 - Warwills Foundry sold to Sycamore Holdings
- 1997 - Cwmtillery Junior School closed
- 1997 - Blaenau Gwent Infants closed

2000s

- 2000 - Roseheyworth Millennium School opened
- 2001 - Ebbw Vale Steelworks – First wave of closure
- 2002 - Ebbw Vale Steelworks – closed
- 2003 - Abertillery Rugby Club suspends fixtures for season
- 2004 - Remploy moves to new premises on Cwmtillery Industrial Estate
- 2006 - Return of rail link to Llanhilleth announced
- 2006 - Mosaics restored
- 2006 - Derelict Metropole Theatre converted to Met Culture and Conference Centre

(Contribution to this timeline made by Abertillery and District Museum, 2000).

3.3 Ynysawdre, Tondy and Sarn - Background

3.3.1 The Bridgend area

The unitary authority of Bridgend sits astride the M4 motorway and stretches from Cornelly in the west to Blackmill and Penprysg in the east, and from Caerau, Blengarw and Nantymoel in the north to Porthcawl, Brynmawr and Coychurch in the south. Sixty percent of its 'lower level super output areas' (LSOAs) fall within the 50% most deprived in Wales, with 12% falling within the 10% most deprived in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005). Bridgend has above average numbers of LSOAs in the 105 most deprived for the categories of overall deprivation, health and employment. However the borough has below average numbers of LSOAs with a 'deprived' classification for education, environment, income, housing and geographical access to services. In November 2004, the Office for National Statistics recorded the percentage of households living in owner occupied accommodation (77%) as above the average for Wales (71%), while The Poverty Site noted that Bridgend suffers from one of the highest levels of homelessness in Wales (www.poverty.org, 2008). At 25.62%, the number of households with no car or van, ranked very slightly below the Welsh average of 25.95%.

3.3.1.1 Population

The 2001 census recorded a resident population for the locale authority area of Bridgend of 128,645, of which 49% were male and 98.63 were white (Census 2001, Office of National Statistics). The average age was 39 years, approximately 1 year older than the average for England and Wales. Between 1982 and 2002 the population of Bridgend grew by 2%, compared to a 4.1% increase for England and Wales, and the mid-2003 estimate was that 130,000 people were living in the locale authority area. In mid-2002, almost 20% of the local population were of retirement age, 1% higher than the England and Wales average.

3.3.1.2 Health

In 2003, the Standardised Mortality Ratio (SMR) indicator recorded the death rate in Bridgend as slightly higher than the UK average - 116 for Bridgend, compared to a UK average of 100. Levels of long-term illness are also higher than average, with the number of people reporting limiting long-term illness in Bridgend almost 7% higher than in England and Wales as a whole. In August 2003, 10.8% (11,730) of residents aged below 65 were claiming Disability Living Allowance, compared to 5.1% for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2006), while Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disability Allowance was claimed by 11,235 people aged between 16 and 65, with 10% of these aged below 30 years. Of the economically active 16-74 year-olds, 10.73% were registered as permanently sick/disabled.

3.3.1.3 Employment

The Bridgend area, until comparatively recently had experienced fewer wide ranging negative effects from the closure of the collieries, due to its major rail links and its proximity to the M4 motorway. Alongside the coal industry, the service sector has been a major field of employment, including the manufacturing industry, transport/distribution and more recently call centres, with the proportion of residents within Blaenau Gwent working in the manufacturing industry currently standing at approximately 27%. The high level of service sector jobs has provided employment for both men and women in the Bridgend area (Gorard and Rees, 2002). However as in Blaenau Gwent, in the last decade, a number of the international companies, many of which were drawn to South Wales by financial inducements, have withdrawn, leaving large numbers of local people again seeking paid work (Gorard and Rees, 2002). In recent years, factories have been closing resulting in large numbers of redundancies; examples include the redundancies in 2005, when manufacturers with long histories in the Bridgend area dispensed with large numbers of employees. These included the Sony TV factories (650 jobs), Christie Tyler furniture makers (238 jobs) and Kraft Foods (173 jobs). Bridgend County Borough Council reported that over the nine months

to July 2005 Bridgend saw more than 2,000 jobs lost or threatened (BCBC, 2006), while the Liberal Democrat's Assembly economic development spokeswoman in 2005, Kirsty Williams, pointed out that between 2001 and 2005 Bridgend had lost almost 16,000 jobs (IC Wales, 13 April, 2006).

In Wales, the most frequently stated reasons for women not being able to work are poor health, caring responsibilities and childcare, and between 2006 and 2007 Bridgend had the third highest level of unemployment in Wales - at 6.3%, higher than the Welsh average of 5.5%. According to the 2001 census, of the people in Bridgend who were unemployed, 15.17% were aged 50 or over, possibly reflecting the high number of redundancies the area has suffered. Twenty-eight percent of the out of work were long-term unemployed, while 7.54% of the unemployed reported that they had never worked. The percentage of men claiming jobseeker's allowance as at April 2008 was 3%, compared to 1.2% of women. At 24.6%, the rate of economic inactivity was slightly below the Welsh average (24.9%), while at 2.3%, the number of people of working age claiming benefits matched the Welsh average (all statistics: Office of National Statistics, 14 May 2008).

Between 2006 and 2007 69.1% economically active residents aged 16+ were in full-time employment (Welsh average 70.9%). However, in April 2008, 6,050 people in Bridgend were claiming income support, with 15% of these aged between 16 and 24, a figure matching the Welsh average. In 2005, the pattern of employment within Bridgend was such that 44% of employed residents held positions in the lower third of the employment categories.

Table 3.5 Socio-economic Classification - Workplace Population (%)

1	Higher managerial and professional occupations	7
1.1	Large employers and higher managerial occupations	3
1.2	Higher professional occupations	4
2	Lower managerial and professional occupations	21
3	Intermediate occupations	10
4	Small employers and own account workers	8
5	Lower supervisory and technical occupations	12
6	Semi-routine occupations	18
7	Routine occupations	14
8	Not classified	3

(Office for National Statistics, 18 April 2005)

A gender difference is also apparent in the census records regarding the numbers of men and women in part-time employment. While 10.14% of females held part-time jobs (a figure matching the Welsh average), only 2.73% of men were in part-time work (a lower figure than the average for Wales).

3.3.1.4 Education

Bridgend has a higher than average number of people possessing no academic qualifications - 36.49%, compared to 33.02% for Wales as a whole, and 29.08% for England and Wales. The average figure for 2005 to 2007 for the proportion of 11-year-olds in Bridgend assessed as failing to achieve level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 was 20% (ONS, 2008). In December 2006, Bridgend had the fourth highest number of working age adults possessing no qualifications but were only the seventh from the bottom of the table of twenty-three local authority areas regarding numbers of residents qualified to NQF Level 4 or above (Statistical Releases, National Assembly for Wales, 2008). In 2004, the overwhelming majority of those possessing no qualifications, or low qualifications were aged over 40 or 50 (Elwa, 2004). During 2001, only 1.93% of economically active 16-74 yr olds in Bridgend were full-time students, compared to 2.3% for Wales, while only 3.36% of economically *inactive* 16-74 yr olds were students, compared to 5.12% for Wales (Office of National Statistics, 2001). However for higher

education, between 2001 and 2002 enrolments had risen by 4.3%, with female students making up 58% of that population.

3.3.2 Ynysawdre, Tondy and Sarn



Figure 3.4: Location of Sarn and Tondy (Ynysawdre lies between)

(Source: Expedia.com)

The area of study mainly incorporates two wards within the Bridgend unitary authority - Sarn and Ynysawdre, which includes Tondy. However, the villages are relatively small and adjoining villages, such as Aberkenfig, Brynmenyn and Bryncethin each have a role to play in the life of local residents. The region was dedicated to farming for many centuries before the coal industry become dominant in Ynysawdre and the local valleys. The Ynysawdre locale lies at the junction of the mouths of three valleys, the Llynfi, the Garw and the Ogmor. However, while enjoying views of the mountains, the study locale itself lies in relatively flat terrain and farming remains a strong presence in the area.

The locale is situated some three miles from the town of Bridgend, twenty miles from Cardiff and twenty-two miles from Swansea. It benefits from easy access to the M4 motorway, lying just one mile from Junction 36.

At the time of the 2001 census, the ward of Ynysawdre (including Tondu) had 3,134 residents, including 1,444 males. Six hundred and forty-eight were aged over sixty-five, 605 below sixteen, while 1,881 were of working age. A little over 99% were white. Sarn was home to 2,389 residents, including 1,182 males. Four hundred and thirty-eight were aged under sixteen, 486 over 65, and 1,465 were of working age (Office of National Statistics, 2001). Ninety-nine and one quarter percent registered with the census as white. Sarn and Ynysawdre are neither among the most deprived nor the most prosperous wards within the county of Bridgend, and neighbouring Aberkenfig and Bryncethin are also rated among the middle ranks. However Bryncoch, a small area consisting of few residential streets lying at the junction of Sarn and Bryncethin, is rated as one of the most deprived local areas (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2005). The housing in this area reflects this, standing in contrast to the housing in the rest of the study area. Despite this small area of poor housing, this locale is not a Communities First area.

Though situated close to the mouths of three valleys, the locale is set in a much more open aspect than Abertillery. While the land here is not flat, this area at the mouth of the valleys benefits from a landscape of gently rolling hillsides, that eventually develops into the mountainous countryside of Welsh valley communities. The locale can be accessed from three major directions; Through Tondu from the north by Bryn Road (A4065), which leads on up the Garw Valley, and through Ynysawdre by the west by Bridgend Road (A4063), which continues up the Llynfi Valley. From the east, the A4061 provides access to Sarn, carrying on past the study area, to lead directly to Brynmenyn Industrial Estate and the smaller Abergarw Trading Estate. Tondu railway station, situated on Bryn Road in Ynysawdre facilitates travel to and from Cardiff. However, while road and rail access is excellent, except for a few local small businesses there appears to be relatively little to draw people, other than residents, from the main roads into Sarn/Ynysawdre.

3.3.2.1 Aberkenfig

At the entry to Ynysawdre from the west along the A4063 is a set of traffic lights that separate Aberkenfig from the study area. At this road junction lies the site of Tondy Brickworks. Until it was demolished in 1977, 'Tondy Brick' was used in the construction of many local buildings, included a number of chapels (Digging up the past: 'Tondy Brickworks', online)

which for many decades had been well known through out the UK for the good standard of its products. The site is now earmarked for development, including the construction of a hotel, restaurant and shopping mall. The turning left leads into Aberkenfig, which is the nearest shopping area, with a main street full of small local shops, restaurants and takeaways. It is also home to the local police station, churches, Aberkenfig Bowls Club, Tondy Rugby Club and Tondy Primary School.



Photograph 3.21: Site of Tondy Brickworks (2006)

3.3.2.2 Tondy

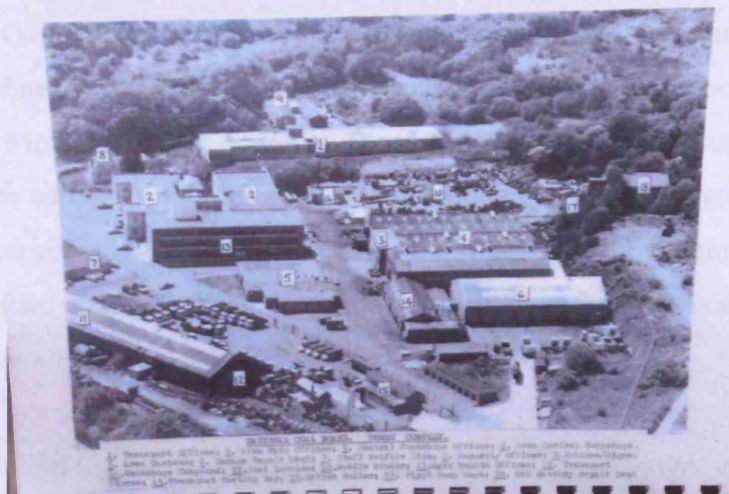
The continuation of Maesteg Road at the traffic lights leads to the site of Tondy Ironworks, an original Victorian Building that ceased operating in the early part of the twentieth century. It has been renovated and is currently the headquarters of Groundworks, a trust working with local communities towards the regeneration of the Bridgend and Neath areas. Tondy possesses a range of residential buildings, ranging from the Victorian Cottages at Park Terrace to newly built housing developments near the ironworks. On the main road opposite the ironworks there is a car sales business and the Llynfi public house.



Photograph 3.22: Tondy Ironworks (2006)

3.3.2.3 Ynysawdre

The entrance to Ynysawdre from Maesteg Road is along Bryn Road. At the traffic lights at the corner of Maesteg Road and Bryn Road lies Tondy Enterprise Park, on the site of the once prominent National Coal Board Training Centre.



Photograph 3.23: NCB Training Centre, Tondur

The Enterprise Park is operated by Business in Focus, and was the first site in its portfolio extending throughout South East Wales. Now the site of approximately 60 workshops, studios and offices, the Enterprise Park also offers storage space and meeting/conference facilities. Situated further along Bryn Road are Tondur Cricket Club, a small parish hall, and Tondur Railway Station; the rest of this section of Bryn Road is occupied by housing.



Photograph 3.24: Tondur Cricket Club

At the junction of Bryn Road and Heol-yr-Ysgol are Bryn Road chapel and Ynysawdre Community Centre, both small, uninspiring buildings. Across the road situated next to each other are Ynysawdre Comprehensive School and Archbishop McGrath Roman Catholic Comprehensive School. Though these have separate entrances, there is no physical boundary between the grounds of the schools. Near the schools in Heol-yr-Ysgol are smart residential homes (semi-detached houses and bungalows) in cul-de-sacs. Heol-yr-Ysgol was also the site of the old swimming pool.

During the initial fieldwork, including the assembly of the photograph collection, the swimming pool was still in existence, although closed. However during the interview period the demolition of the pool began in order to facilitate the building of a small leisure complex, including a new swimming pool. The pool was demolished by the end of 2006. In February 2008, this building work on the new complex was progressing well, with the children's playground that had previously been sited outside the swimming pool remaining.



Photograph 3.25: Business in Focus – Tondu Enterprise Centre



Photograph 3.26: The now-demolished Ynysawdre swimming pool with the still existing children's playground in foreground

Alongside and behind the swimming pool, opposite the Ynysawdre Comprehensive playing field is Pandy Park, a large grassy area used by the local community. It is a well-maintained park, which is generally devoted to weekend football and rugby matches. Across the park, at the opposite side from Heol-yr-Ysgol is access to Aberkenfig via a pedestrian subway under the busy Maesteg Road, entering near Tondu Rugby Club.



Photograph 3.27: Pandy Park

Further along Heol-yr-Ysgol is housing of various descriptions, including semi-detached houses and flats, with one block of flats also housing a rank of small shops, including a newsagents and a fish and chip shop.

3.3.2.4 Sarn

Heol-yr-Ysgol enters Sarn, and situated here are a new development of detached houses and a residential home for elderly people. A small Filco supermarket, the main shopping facility in the village is situated at the corner where the road meets the main Sarn road. The western end of this road is accessed from Maesteg Road and is made up of mainly semi-detached housing. Along this road are Llansanffraid Church, the village post office and Sarn Railway Station, on the Maesteg to Cardiff rail link. A little further down the road is a rank of small shops (including a tanning centre and a dog grooming salon), and from here towards the east the housing changes to council and ex-council properties.



Photograph 3.28: Heol Canola, Sarn

In front of this housing estate occupying a large corner plot is Sarn Social Club, a major centre for social events in the immediate area. Opposite the social club is a

relatively small building that is Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre. Originally a drop-in centre established by volunteers within the community to tackle social exclusion at all ages, it now benefits from local government funding and limited outreach worker presence (Manager of Lifelong Learning Centre, personal communication, 27 February 2006). The centre houses a small library offering computer facilities and a limited selection of books, a crèche, a credit union, and a hall that is used most days for a range of activities including parenting classes, bingo, craft sessions, meetings and private social events. From the Lifelong Learning Centre the housing changes dramatically to housing association properties that appear to be in poor condition. At this location is Sarn Nursery School, from where the housing changes yet again to older cottages before ceasing at Bryncethin Road. It is at this junction that Bryncethin Primary School is located.



Photograph 3.29: Sarn Social Club



Photograph 3.30: Sarn Lifelong Learning Centre

3.3.2.5 *Bryncethin and Brynmenyn*

From this junction Sarn becomes Bryncethin, an area with more expensive housing than Sarn, along with a public house and a few shops. The main road through Bryncethin leads to Brynmenyn, which is dominated by a large industrial estate. Brynmenyn Industrial estate houses units used for a range of purposes, including heavy mechanical engineering, double glazing salesrooms, vehicle and tool hire companies and a number of sofa manufacturers and/or sales premises. At the time of fieldwork, a number of the units were vacant.



Photograph 3.31: Royal Oak Public House, Bryncethin

Further within Brynmenyn lies a smaller industrial estate, also with vacant units, and a larger sofa manufacturing company. The housing here is made up mainly of terraced houses, with some scattered small retail units, including a bridal wear shop and a newsagent. However one major feature in Brynmenyn is Bryngarw Country House and Park, a facility that draws large numbers of visitors and presents a range of events throughout the year. The house itself is a sought after venue for weddings and other social events, while the grounds include woods, gardens and a large play area for children.



Photograph 3.32: Bryngarw Country House and Park

3.3.2.6 McArthur Glen Shopping Centre

Although lying a mile outside the immediate study area, McArthur Glen Shopping Centre, a covered facility known locally as ‘The Pines’ features strongly in the lives of many residents. The centre has over 100 retail units, many of which are discount stores for well-known companies such as Marks and Spencer, Cadbury, Nike and Calvin Klein, along with a children’s indoor play area, a coffee shop, a large fast food outlet and a multi-screen cinema. Alongside the centre are a Sainsbury’s store and a Harvester public house/restaurant/hotel. Shops within the centre are the source of both full-time and part-time employment for young people from the surrounding area, including those still at school holding Saturday jobs.



Photograph 3.33: McArthur Glen Shopping Centre



Photograph 3.34: McArthur Glen Foodcourt and Cinema

3.3.2.7 Schools

The school system in the Tondy/Sarn area and the Garw Valley has undergone significant change over the past four decades. Until the mid sixties, children attended either their local grammar or secondary modern school. However, with the construction of a purpose built comprehensive school in Ynysawdre, local secondary schooling in the Garw Valley came to an end. Ynysawdre is also home to a Roman Catholic Comprehensive School, which accepts students from a wide area. A further comprehensive school – Ogmere – lies just a mile from Sarn and takes children from Bryncethin Primary School, which lies within the study area.

Ynysawdre Comprehensive School was constructed in 1966 on the site of the long-defunct Coytrahern Park Colliery, which closed in 1928. The school takes children aged 11 to 18 years. During informal interviews, the Head of Sixth Form at Ynysawdre Comprehensive explained that both Garw Grammar School and Ffaldau Secondary Modern School - both sited approximately five miles away in Pontycymmer - ceased operating and since these closures students have travelled to the Ynysawdre Comprehensive School. He also explained that for some years Garw grammar school's Victorian building was used to accommodate year 7 children, as Ynysawdre Comprehensive was not yet large enough to do this, but substantial extension work in 1988 resulted in all children receiving schooling in the new building in Ynysawdre. Currently Ynysawdre Comprehensive has six 'feeder' schools, one of which are located in the general study area, with the remaining five situated at the edge of the study locale or further up the Garw Valley.

In September 2007, 895 students were enrolled at Ynysawdre Comprehensive (BCBC, 2007), an increase from July 2007, when there were 888 students on roll, with 127 of these in the sixth form (Ynysawdre Comprehensive, personal communication, 2007). However, both these figures illustrate an overall decrease from 929 in 2002 (Estyn, 2002). The area Ynysawdre Comprehensive serves is economically diverse. Approximately half of the pupils live in areas experiencing some features of economic and social disadvantage, while the remainder come from areas considered neither particularly prosperous nor disadvantaged (Estyn,

2002). However the catchment area is recognised by Estyn as one of the most deprived in socioeconomic terms in the Borough of Bridgend, and in the 2002 Estyn report, approximately 30% of students at Ynysawdre Comprehensive were recorded as being eligible for free school meals.

The school has established strong associations with supportive local industrial and business concerns. In 2002, around 100 local industrial work placements were available for year 10 and year 11 students. Additionally, more than fifty local companies provided support for the school, including sponsorships to provide a car park, facilities and workshops, incentives to encourage attendance and schemes to aid revision, and the teaching of skills such as banking, publishing and engineering (Estyn, 2002).



Photograph 3.35: Ynysawdre Comprehensive School

Archbishop McGrath Roman Catholic Comprehensive School is a voluntary aided mixed school, catering for students aged 11 – 19 years. There are currently 708 students in total, with 118 sixth-form students, an increase from 2001, when 659 students attended the school and 92 were in the sixth form (Estyn, 2007). Only eight percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; less than half the national average (16.6%) (Estyn, 2007). The school benefits from, links with industry, and

all year 10 pupils undertake monitored work placements associated with the career aspirations of each pupil.

Ogmore Comprehensive School is located in the village of Bryncethin, less than a mile from Sarn, in the study area and enrolls children aged 11 to 18 years. The school is local authority-run co-educational school serving those living in Bryncethin, Sarn and the Ogmore Valley. As is the case for Ynysawdre Comprehensive, the area Ogmore Comprehensive serves is economically diverse, due to the catchment area covering the Ogmore Valley communities along with the area at the mouth of the valley. A significant number of pupils come from economically disadvantaged areas and, while Estyn noted that a small number of pupils come from relatively economically advantaged area, approximately 19% of pupils are eligible for free school meals (Estyn, 2007). In its 2007 inspection report, Estyn reported 711 pupils on the roll, which constituted a decrease of 104 since 2001. However, the 107 enrolled in the sixth represented an increase since that previous inspection (Estyn, 2007). The school has successful links with industry through its association with local businesses, which provide work experience and support for school students.

Bryncethin Primary School is situated in Bryncethin, to the north of Bridgend and serves both Bryncethin and Sarn. The school lies at the end of Heol Canola, the main street through Sarn, close to Ynysawdre Comprehensive School, but as it is equidistant from Ynysawdre Comprehensive and Ogmore Comprehensive, pupils from Bryncethin Primary have the option of attending either school. In 2007 the numbers were split between both schools. However the majority of Bryncethin School children enrolling in secondary schooling in September 2008 have opted to attend Ogmore Comprehensive School. Bryncethin Primary School has existed in some form for more than 100 years, with a separate infants section added during the sixties. The current Bryncethin Primary School was formed in September 2001 following the amalgamation of the previously separate infant and junior schools on the site (Estyn, 2005), and considerable improvements have been made to the school since then. Bryncethin Primary School takes children aged from four to eleven years, and in September 2007 there were 220 pupils enrolled

(Estyn, 2007), showing a decline since the Estyn inspection in 2000. In 2005, approximately 24% of pupils were entitled to free-school meals, which is above both the local and national averages (Estyn, 2005). The school maintains links with industry, and through this benefits from both pupil's visits to workplaces and funding for materials and additional resources.



Photograph 3.36: Bryncethin Primary School

Tondu Primary School is situated in Meadow Street, Aberkenfig, and takes pupils from Aberkenfig, Tondu and part of Sarn from three to eleven years-of-age. The remaining Sarn children attend Bryncethin Primary School, with the dividing line running roughly north to south along Heol Cwrdd and Bryncoch Road. Built approximately thirty years ago, the current school replaced the earlier Tondu Primary School in Maesteg Road in Tondu itself, which was built in the early 1900s. Most current pupils live within walking distance, but Estyn reports a significant minority having to travel to school by bus (Estyn, 2007). Pupils transfer to the school at the beginning of key stage 2 from Pandy Infant School, which takes pupils aged from three to seven years and currently has approximately 80 children on its roll. There are currently 158 pupils at Tondu Primary school, and around 26% of these are entitled to free-school meals (Estyn, 2007). The school has been reported as providing good work-related education, including interview and work-related experience.

Sarn Nursery School is a local authority maintained school lying on Heol Canola in Sarn. Operating since 1974, it usually caters for around 50-60 children aged between three and four years-old, who come from the immediate area, but in September 2007 had just 42 on its roll (BCBC, 2007). The school has a partnership with local companies, which allows for both exposure to the world of work and the benefits of sponsorship and donations.

A number of primary schools lie outside the study area, but pupils from these schools attend Ynysawdre Comprehensive School:

Blaengarw Primary School lies at the head of the Garw Valley, approximately six miles from the study area, and is mainly attended by children from Blaengarw village itself. Though the building is more than 100 years old, the school as it is opened in 1996 when the former infant and junior schools on the site were amalgamated. It currently serves children aged three to eleven, and has approximately 170 enrolled (BCBC, 2007). Like Pontycymmer, this area is economically disadvantaged, with 19% of pupils entitled to free school meals in 2002 (Estyn, 2002).

Bettws Primary School, situated approximately 2.5 miles from the study area, lies in a Communities First ward. In 2005, 52% of its 238 pupils entitled to free school meals (Estyn, 2005), however Bridgend County Borough Council reports that the school had 214 children on its roll in September 2007. There is a strong emphasis on promoting work-related education in this school (Estyn, 2005).

Ffaldau Primary School lies in the heart of Pontycymmer, set in an economically disadvantaged area within the Garw Valley, and approximately five and a half miles from Ynysawdre Comprehensive School, and the main study area. The majority of pupils live in the town, with the rest attending from surrounding towns and villages. The school has existed for at least 100 years and has been reported as experiencing no mergers, rebuilds or other major changes in that time (personal communication, Ffaldau Primary School Headteacher, 2007). Ffaldau Primary School caters for pupils aged from four to eleven, though the number of pupils fell between 2000 (193) and 2002 (170). The last Estyn report, in 2001 stated that

18% of the children were entitled to free school meals (Estyn, 2001), and there are currently 150 pupils enrolled (BCBC, 2007). Estyn reports the school's partnership with industry to be good, involving visits and visitors related to working life (2001).

Tynyrheol Primary School is situated on the main A-road running through the village of Llangeinor, and lies some five and miles from the main study area. Estyn reports that more than half the catchment area is considered economically disadvantaged, with 46% of pupils entitled to free school meals (Estyn, 2004). In September 2007 the school had just 71 pupils on its roll

Brynmenyn Primary School lying in the village of Brynmenyn, an area dominated by industrial estates, and which has recently experienced a rise in pupil numbers. In September 2007, 179 children were registered with the school (Estyn, 2006). The school maintains links with the world of work.

3.3.2.8 Local college

The nearest college serving the area is Bridgend College, which dates back to 1928. The following information is provided by Bridgend College (bridgend.ac.uk, 2008): Founded by the Miner's Welfare Fund, it was known at this time as Bridgend Mining and Technical Institute, and held its classes in the evenings to accommodate working miners. The Junior Technical School, formed in 1930 made available day-time technical education for 13 – 15 year-old boys. The institution became a Senior Technical School in 1945, and Bridgend Technical College in 1949, offering both the full-time and part-time courses. In 1975 the college was upgraded to Bridgend College of Technology. Currently serving approximately 10,000 students and providing employment for 800 staff members, it has campuses in Bridgend, Pencoed, Maesteg and Porthcawl offering a total of more than 500 courses, from Pre-entry to Degree level. Bridgend College also delivers basic skills courses and 'taster' sessions at various community locations.

3.3.2.9 Universities

There are four universities between 20 and 25 miles from the Ynysawdre locale; Cardiff University, University of Wales Institute, Cardiff (UWIC), University of Glamorgan and Swansea University, all relatively easily accessed by road.

3.3.2.10 The coal industry in and around the locale

The coal industry was extremely prominent in this locale, employing many local men. Many collieries were situated within five miles of Tondy/Sarn, thus even though they were located within the valleys rather than the locale itself, any description of the locale must allow for some mention of the collieries. However, due to the large number of collieries that have operated either in or around the locale, with the exception of Park Slip, which was located particularly close to the study locale, this overview considers only those that have closed since the 1950s. The following information was obtained from welshcoalmines.co.uk:

Parc Slip Colliery was located near Tondy, in Aberkenfig. It began operating around 1864 and was owned by the Ogmore Coal and Iron Company until 1889 when it was taken over by The North Navigation Company. In 1892, with 146 workers below ground, a massive explosion ripped through the mine killing 110 men and boys. In 1896, 268 miners were employed at Parc Slip. Parc slip colliery closed in 1904.

First sunk by the International Coal Company Ltd. in 1883, the *International Colliery (The Carn)* in Blaengarw employed over a thousand workers at its peak in 1896 (Inspector of Mines List, cited in welshcoalmines.co.uk). During 1928, while still employing almost a thousand workers, the mine was sold to Glenavon Collieries Ltd., then sold once more in 1937 to Ocean Coal Company Ltd. In 1938 664 miners were working at The Carn, but by 1945 this number had reduced to just 552. The mine closed permanently in 1968.

Braichycymmer Colliery, in Pontycymmer, was opened by the Ffaldau Colliery Company In 1890, and in 1896, the Inspector of Mines List recorded 435 men

employed at the mine. A further 200 men were working at Braichycymmer by 1908, and a merger in 1918 with *Ffaldau Colliery* (sunk in 1877) raised this figure to 995. However by 1945 only 593 miners were on the payroll at what was now known as Ffaldau Colliery. A further merger in the 1970s with Garw Mine saw over one thousand miners at the Garw/Ffaldau Mine (known as The Ocean)



Photograph 3.37: Part of Ffaldau Colliery site (2006)

The *Ocean Colliery (The Garw)*, in Blaengarw, opened two years after The Carn, in 1885, though originally it employed half as many miners as the older mine. The Ocean was sunk by the Blaengarw Ocean Coal Company and, though originally called the Garw, the mine soon took its name from the owning company, which retained ownership until nationalisation in 1947. Although numbers increased to 729 in 1923, by 1945 this figure had reduced to 682. However in 1975 a merger with the Ffaldau Colliery resulted in approximately 1,000 miners employed in the larger consolidated mine. The Ocean was the last mine to operate in the Garw Valley, closing in 1985.



Photograph 3.38: The route into Ocean Colliery circa 1980
(photograph courtesy of Mrs Marzi Howe, local resident)



Photograph 3.39: The site circa 2001
(photograph courtesy of Mrs Marzi Howe, local resident)

Aberbaiden Colliery was opened near Kenfig Hill by Baldwins Ltd. in 1906. In the ten years between 1908 and 1918 the workforce increased from 295 to 940,

and by nationalisation in 1947, 1,157 workers were on the payroll. Following a merge with Tytalwyn Colliery Aberbaiden Colliery closed in January 1959.

Tytalwyn Colliery, a slant mine, was opened near Kenfig Hill in the early 1900s by Ton Phillip Rhondda Company. Tytalwyn was merged with other Ton Phillip slants and by 1918 employed 767 workers. By 1945 it was owned by Tytalwyn Colliery Company Ltd. Following nationalisation, Tytalwyn became part of Aberbaiden Colliery which closed in 1959.

Bryn Navigation Colliery was sunk at Measteg in the Llynfi Valley in the mid 1890s by Baldwin Ltd., and by 1923 employed 683 men. However by 1945 this number had reduced to 615. Bryn Navigation Colliery closed in 1964.

Glenavon Colliery, in Blaengarw, was developed by Glanavon Garw Collieries Ltd. in 1906. This remained a small operation, with 119 workers employed by 1908, reducing over the next ten years to just 69 miners. In 1945 the workforce amounted to only 104, and Glenavon closed in 1949.

Werntarw Colliery began operating in 1900, owned by W.W. Lewis. Ownership changed a number of times between 1906 and 1937, when it was run by South Wales Coalite Company Ltd. At its peak in 1943, the mine employed 900 workers. However, under the ownership of the National Coal Board, it closed in 1964.

Caerau Colliery, in the Llynfi Valley was sunk in 1889 by North Navigation Collieries and by 1908, the workforce numbered 1,227. In 1913 Caerau Colliery held the record for output, and by 1918, the workforce numbered 1,839, rising to 2,380 by 1923. However by 1945, just 586 miners worked at Caerau Colliery, which eventually closed in 1979.

3.3.2.11 Employment

In the Ynysawdre locale manufacturing has been a major source of employment for both men and women, and the Christie Tyler Furniture Company until recently

employed a high number of the local community. Founded in 1933, with factories around the UK, the company has its headquarters in the Bridgend area. In 2002 claiming to produce one quarter of the UK's upholstered furniture, Christie Tyler reported sales of £399m. However by 2005 hundreds of Christie Tyler workers in South Wales were made redundant (Business Week: <http://investing.businessweek.com/esearchstocks/private/snapshot.asp?privcapId=2159165>).



Photograph 3.40: Part of the former Christie Tyler site in Brynmenyn (2008)

(Photo: <http://www.novaloca.com/property-details/12379>)

Although not situated within the study locale, a number of large employers within the wider Bridgend area currently provide jobs for local people. The Sony electronics plant in Bridgend was established in 1974, with its sister plant opening at nearby Pencoed in 1992. At one time the two plants employed more than 4,000 workers and 50% of the output from the factory was exported to continental Europe and Africa, accounting for approximately 30% of all colour televisions exported from the UK (sony.net, 2008). However numbers had reduced to around 900 when the announcements came in January 2005 that 400 jobs in the Bridgend factory and 250 in Pencoed would be lost, due to the lack of demand for cathode ray tube televisions (news.bbc.co.uk, 29 June 2005). Two years earlier Sony had

stated that no jobs would be lost in Wales as a result of their global restructuring plans (news.bbc.co.uk, 28 October 2003). The Ford Motor company plant was constructed in Bridgend in the 1970s and occupies a 60 acre site within easy reach of Ynyswdre. In 2007 the company reported a workforce of 1,800 (Media.ford.com: 31 July 2007 Press Release). Lloyds TSB call centre in Pencoed is a further source of employment for people in the Ynysawdre locale, as is Rockwool in Pencoed and Werntarw. Rockwool UK Ltd, established in 1978, manufactures mineral wool insulation for thermal, fire and acoustic protection, and employs several hundred workers.

Chapter 4

Connecting themes and social representations: making sense of the locale

4.1: Introduction

The initial aim of the interviews was to map the social representations of the two locales. The photo-elicitation instrument was designed to allow an exploration of these social representations through the responses of local people. Initially a sense of the themes that were meaningful in each locale was obtained by walking, looking and listening, by engaging people in conversation. Visits to a variety of locations, including a museum, shops, schools, libraries, shopping centres homes elicited information, suggestions and advice from a variety of local people. Documents from a range of locations, including university and local libraries, museums, schools and workplaces also provided useful information.

During the photo-elicitation interviews, the photographs re-presented to participants some of the material and visual features of their locale. The collection of images was an edited version of the bigger geographical space in which they live. The images were chosen to capture features in the locale that carry meaning, as local culture encapsulates meaning that is embedded in material form:

‘Material culture – tables and chairs, buildings and cities – is the reification of human ideas in a solid medium.’

(D’Andrade, 1986, in Bornstein and Lamb, 2005, p.22)

During the study particular themes emerged across each locale revealing the social representations that were circulating within each community. These themes arose during the interviews, sometimes prompted by the images, but sometimes spontaneously.

The recognition of social representations circulating in each locale laid the foundations for investigating the meanings that individuals conferred upon them, and for identifying patterns occurring among age and gender groups. The photographs represented a wide range of material features within the locales and through these, aspects of the visual, physical locality were presented to community members who responded to them in a variety of ways. The images that were used by specific groups of people to talk about their locale were those in which they had invested meaning. Particularly apparent were the differences between the three generations regarding both the selection of images, and the meanings that these images carried for them. The temporal point at which they had entered the locale had constrained both the social representations available for them and the meanings they were able to attach to them. Additionally, within generational groups men and women responded to some of the images in very different ways. These different responses have allowed both the identification of dominant themes and recognition of how particular themes have persisted or not over time.

The following chapter identifies dominant themes that emerged in the Abertillery locale. It recognises the different meanings that these had for men and women of different generations. The Ynysawdre locale is considered at the end of the chapter for comparative purposes. This compares the salience of the themes in two different locales, and also considers the meanings conferred upon these themes by different generations of men and women in the locales.

4.2 Abertillery Themes

Table 4.1: Abertillery Participants

<u>Participant group</u>	Unstructured interviews		Photo-elicitation interviews	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<u>Older</u>	David Malcolm Richard Ron	Mary	Adrian Ashley Jim Theo	Ellen Hazel Jean
<u>Middle</u>	Peter	Juliet Melissa	Alex Howard Jeremy Sam	Deborah Rachel
<u>Younger</u>	Stuart	Bethan Lucy	Liam Neil	Amy Kirsten Sarah

Salient themes were identified through a thematic analysis of both data sets. The photo-elicitation interviews were analysed by categorising the image selections of each participant and their verbal responses. Specific themes were introduced by the photo-elicitation interview images and schedule, for example, 'the landscape', 'education' and 'mining'. However, a range of additional themes that interrelated with these emerged spontaneously from the participants themselves as the interviews progressed, for example 'the body', 'loss' and 'fragmentation'. A form of triangulation using the more spontaneous unstructured interviews adds further depth to the analysis. This confirmed the salience for Abertillery community members of many of the themes identified in the photo-elicitation interviews. However, while some of the themes emerged initially through the image selections of the photo-elicitation interviewees and were supported by the unstructured interviews, other strong themes stemmed primarily from the unstructured accounts. The design of the unstructured interviews also allowed for

an increased elaboration of some of the themes, adding a further richness to the analysis.

A primary aim was to identify generational and sex-group differences regarding the availability and importance of particular themes for different groups of community members. By comparing the occurrence of themes in the accounts of individuals of different ages and genders, and the meanings these carried for them, the analysis identified that while a theme might be salient for more than one age or gender group, it could carry very different meanings for them. Additionally, social representations do not exist independently of each other. As many of the main themes shared related sub-themes and were inextricably linked, some cross-referencing is a natural outcome of the analysis.

Primary themes were:

- Beauty of the Landscape
- Industrial use of the landscape
- Mining
- Identity of the locale
- Above ground/Below ground
- The Body, The Hands and The Mind
- Unity and Fragmentation
- Decline and Deterioration
- Loss
- Schooling
- 'Real world' teaching and learning
- College
- Responsibility for learning
- Sources of support
- Work-related education and/or training
- The future

4.2.1 *Beauty of the landscape*

All the Abertillery participants referred to the physical landscape at some point in their interview. Two main sub-themes emerged - the visual landscape and usage of the land over time. The theme 'beauty of the landscape' incorporated notions of attractiveness, ugliness and change, while references to land usage were underpinned by themes of the past, primarily industry and employment, and will be discussed in the next section.

'Beauty of the landscape' was one of the most dominant themes in the photo-elicitation interviews. The image of Cwmtillery Lakes was at the core of this theme, followed by the shops in Church Street and the mosaics. Cwmtillery Lakes, selected at least once by fifteen of the eighteen participants, was one of the two most popular images selected in response to the question '*Which images would you choose to represent your area to someone from outside?*' It was the second most selected image for the question '*Would you select the 3 pictures that you feel most represent your area?*' and was the third most selected image used in response to the question '*Would you select the images that you feel most relate to your life?*'



Photograph 4.1: Cwmtillery Lakes

This image had initially been included in the collection in the category ‘Recreation’, but was reassigned to ‘Beauty of the landscape’ by the responses of the interviewees. Eleven of the participants used either the term ‘beauty’ or ‘beautiful’ in response to images they had selected, while other comments included ‘looks nice’, ‘pleasant’ and ‘an attractive focal point’. The theme ‘Beauty of the landscape’ involved comments relating to both the visual and the subjective:

Table 4.2: Beauty of the Landscape: Visual and Subjective features

<u>Beauty of the landscape</u>	<i>Visual</i>	Green Mountains Beauty Pleasant
	<i>Subjective</i>	Community Lovely family place Social Comforting Home Reassurance

Both the photo-elicitation and the unstructured interviews elicited positive references to the local mountains and views of the valley. Unstructured interview participants spoke of magnificent views and scenic mountain walks, while some of the photo-elicitation interviewees suggested the inclusion of more scenic images when asked if they felt any important images were missing.

Table 4.3: Additional scenic images suggested

Group	Total	No. responded	Suggestion	Explanation
OM	n=4	1 Adrian	View of Abertillery from St Illtyd's Church on top of mountain	"Beautiful trees, mountains and that"
OF	n=3	2 Hazel	Mountains	"We're surrounded by mountain scenery"
		Ellen	Views of the valley towards Aberbeeg	"To show the area from a distance, the views of the countryside"
MM	n=4	2 Sam	Mountains, scenery	"To show the beauty of the area for tourism"
		Jeremy	St Illtyd's Church Top of Cwmtillery Valley	"Oldest building in the area, and it's beautiful inside"
MF	n=2	2 Rachel	Panorama of the town in valley setting	"Abertillery's in such a lovely setting"
		Deborah	St Paul's Church	"It's a beautiful Church"
YM	n=2	0		
YF	n=3	1 Kirsten	Town/Valley view	"To show the way the town is surrounded by mountains. The mountain view is beautiful"

Both generational and sex-group differences were apparent in the salience of this theme. This indicated how the physical landscape carried different meanings for different groups of people. Specifically, the men of the middle generation were much less positive about their locale than other participant groups. The older men connected the beauty of the landscape to its prior use, for example '*Beautiful, functional, historical*' (Ashley) and '*The past, the present, the future, beautiful*' (Theo). However, the middle group focused on the negative effects of de-

industrialisation on the town, e.g. '*Beauty, sadness and struggle*' (Jeremy), '*Beauty, deteriorated, change*' (Howard) and '*Beauty, change, deprived*' (Alex). The theme 'Beauty of the landscape' appeared to have little salience for the younger men. None of the younger participants in either interview cohort spoke of the landscape in this way. During the photo-elicitation interviews, Cwmtillery Lakes was not mentioned as a feature that either represented the locale, or as one the young men could relate to. It was selected only once to represent the locale to an outsider.

The photo-elicitation interview accounts of the women did not show evidence of generational differences. However, they did suggest a sex-group difference. The theme of 'Beauty of the landscape' had a different salience for them than it had for the older and middle generations of men. For women, beauty of the current landscape was salient for all three generations - seven of the nine women cited Cwmtillery lakes as an image they would use to represent the locale to an outsider, because '*It's pleasant*' (Sarah) and '*It looks nice*' (Hazel). However, it was selected only twice by women as representative of the locale, and again only twice as a feature they could personally relate to. This suggests that while these women appreciate the attractiveness of the landscape, it did not connect them in the same way to the past life of the locale.

Table 4.4: Summary: Beauty of the landscape

Sex group	Generation	Salience of theme
Men	Older	Positive (history of the locale)
	Middle	Negative (change of town, deterioration)
	Younger	Positive (visual attractiveness)
Women	All generations	Positive (visual attractiveness)

4.2.2 Industrial land use

One difference in the accounts of older men and women was the importance of prior industrial use of the landscape. Although the older women acknowledged prior industry, they focused primarily on the visual attractiveness of the landscape. In contrast, the accounts of the older men prioritised the industrial heritage of the locale. The ways in which the physical locale had been transformed by the collieries, and re-constructed by subsequent re-landscaping was a subject that was raised repeatedly by the older male participants. Of the photo-elicitation interview participants, the responses of older men indicated the value they attached to the industrial usage of the land in and around Abertillery. The images of Cwmtillery and Rose Heyworth pithead wheels and the Vivian NCB pumping station formed the core of this theme, with these images referred to often throughout the interviews. The unstructured interviews with older men supported the importance of past industry. Although dirty, noisy and dangerous, it had also been valuable to the local community.



Photograph 4.2: Vivian Pumping Station (site of former mine)

While the older men selected non-mining images as currently representative of the locale, they did not enthuse about these images. Instead they presented the detrimental effects of mining as a fair price to pay for the benefits community

members received, in terms of recognition, status and identity. This theme was echoed in the accounts of the older unstructured interview participants. All spoke of the high number of mines located in the locale and the proximity of these mines to their homes. However, all saw the fact that men could reach work on foot and were never far from their homes as a positive aspect. When there was mention of the noise, smells, coal dust and the related inconvenience that was experienced above ground by coal producing communities, it was spoken of with humour and a sense of 'insider' knowledge and understanding possessed by members of mining communities. 'Mining' emerged as a particularly important theme for this generation, and will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

Sex-group differences in the salience of 'industrial use of the landscape' were also apparent in the accounts of the middle and younger group members. The middle group women made only brief acknowledgments of the prior existence of heavy industry, while the men spoke more specifically and more negatively of the industrial use of the local landscape.

In the younger group a different pattern emerged when they spoke of the landscape. While the younger women, like those of the middle group made slight references to the past, the accounts of the younger male participants indicated that the theme of heavy industry was not salient for this generation of men. Only one of the young men in this study (Liam) mentioned local heavy industry, and this was to dismiss it as of the past and of no relevance: "*Looking at these, these are all the old things from Abertillery. Obviously I've not grown up with them, like I said, 'cause I'm young*". Instead, the younger men focused on the visual attractiveness of the landscape and its more modern material culture (e.g. the comprehensive school, the shops, and the rugby ground).

Table 4.5: Summary of 'Industrial use of the landscape'

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of theme
Older	Men	Salient Positive focus on the past
	Women	Less salient Positive focus on the present
Middle	Men	Salient Negative focus on the past
	Women	Not salient
Younger	Men	Not salient
	Women	Less salient Neutral focus on historical value

4.2.3 Mining

'Mining' emerged in the accounts of both photo-elicitation and unstructured interview participant, and underpinned or was related to a number of others (Table 4.8). These will be discussed in other sections of this chapter. Mining was spoken of every differently by the sub-groups in both cohorts. This section firstly considers how photo-elicitation interviewees of each generation responded to images relating to mining, and then how mining emerges from the unstructured accounts.

'Mining' did not appear salient from the outset of the photo-elicitation interviews. No 'mining' photographs were chosen as representative of the Abertillery locale, nor were they among those considered to most relate to people's lives. However, 'mining' images dominated the selections regarding how people believed their

locale to be recognised by outsiders. Community members of all ages indicated their belief that their locale is still recognised as a coal-mining area 18 years after the last mine closed, clearly highlighting the persisting relevance of this theme. In response to the question *'Which pictures do you think someone from London would choose to represent this area?'* images of Cwmtillery and Rose Heyworth pithead wheels received at least twice as many selections as the next most popular choices. Only four participants failed to select at least one of the mining images; two older women, a middle group woman and a younger man.



Photograph 4.3: Cwmtillery pithead wheel



Photograph 4.4: Roseheyworth pithead wheel

A discontinuity was apparent in the photo-elicitation accounts. Mining had not been considered representative of the locale, nor of relevance to people's lives; however, four of the mining images were consistently selected by participants to represent the locale to an outsider (Cwmtillery pithead wheel, Rose Heyworth pithead wheel, Vivian NCB pumping station and a mosaic depicting mining). The participants first selected a number of 'mining' images to represent how they believed the locale is recognized by outsiders and then appeared to match their own selections to this.

Again, differences were apparent between the three generations of men. Older men explained that the 'mining' photographs represented '*The good days when we were on the map*' (Jim), while middle group men accompanied their selections with comments such as '*Unfortunately, the mining ones*' (Howard) and '*Mining, obviously, people still think that's all we are*' (Jeremy). Younger group men did not select mining images to represent the locale to an outsider; instead they focused on 'Beauty' and 'Education'.

The generational difference among the women was reversed, with 'mining' less salient for the older women than it was for the other two groups. Like younger men, the older women opted for Cwmtillery Lakes (Beauty).

Table 4.6: Would select 'mining' images to represent the locale to an outsider

		Total	Number selecting mining images
Older	Men	n = 4	4
	Women	n = 3	1
Middle	Men	n = 4	3
	Women	n = 2	2
Younger	Men	n = 2	0
	Women	n = 3	2

Cwmtillery Lakes, representing 'beauty of the landscape' initially appeared to be a contrasting theme to that of mining. It was equally as popular as Cwmtillery Colliery for representing the locale to an outsider, and was slightly more popular with women than men - nine of the women selecting this image, compared to four of the men. However, among older men, Cwmtillery Lakes appeared to be re-categorised once again, this time to 'Mining', as three of the four older men made references to its original use as a feeder lake for Cwmtillery Colliery, a reference also made by two of the older men in the unstructured interview cohort.

The theme of 'mining' was particularly salient for the older participants taking part in the unstructured interviews. The accounts of the older woman, Mary, the widow of a mine manager, along with those of three of the four older men were infused with the mining history of the locale, and from these accounts emerged a particularly high number of related themes. Mining underpinned the ways in which these community members were able to make sense of themselves and imagine their futures. Metalworking, the other major heavy industry within the locale also elicited similar sub-themes. However, it was mining that emerged across both data sets as the identifying practice of the locale. Specifically, an underlying notion of 'rivalry' emerged, a rivalry between the mining locale of Abertillery and the nearby steel working locale of Ebbw Vale, a rivalry based currently on the massive scale of the regeneration of the steelworks site, compared to the limited re-use of the Abertillery colliery sites.

For those of the older group to whom mining was a salient theme, 'Mining' equated with 'Locale'; the local land and the production of coal had given the locale its purpose, identity, traditions wealth and recognition. It had also constructed and supported extremely gendered social roles, which appeared to have contributed to the maintenance of a sense of community. Mining was seen as pulling the community together, and miners and their families enjoyed a strong sense of belonging. Miners were seen as powerful, employable and well paid members of the community who enjoyed relatively high status.

The overall theme of 'mining' created a sex-group split in the middle generation across the data sets, with mining much more salient to the men than the women.

Mining was not mentioned in either of the two unstructured interview accounts with women, and elicited relatively unemotional, neutral comments from those taking part in the photo-elicitation interviews. For these participants mining was merely an acknowledged part of the history of the locale. However, the photo-elicitation interviews showed that for middle group men mining carried strong negative meanings rather than the positive meanings it carried for the older generation. Sub-themes emerging from the accounts of these men included the ‘exploitation’ of local men in the collieries, the unpleasant and unhealthy environment produced by mining, and the dependence on coal production that had set restrictions on the development of the town, resulting in its ultimate decline.

While there was also a difference in the salience of mining within the younger group, this was different to that of the middle group. Younger women selected ‘mining’ photographs to represent the locale to outsiders, while younger men did not. However, like the middle group women, younger women made unemotional references to mining in terms of the history of the locale. In complete contrast to the middle group men, however, mining held no salience for the younger men. Only one young man mentioned mining at all, and this was to disregard the pithead wheels as ‘old things’. Overall there was a strong sense of discontinuity and change across the accounts of the three generations of men, from salient/positive through salient/negative to not salient.

Table 4.7: Summary of ‘Mining’

Sex group	Generation	Salience of theme
Older	Men	Salient – Positive
	Women	Salient – Positive but distanced
Middle	Men	Salient - Negative
	Women	Not salient
Younger	Men	Not salient
	Women	Not salient

Table 4.8: Themes emerging from ‘mining’ in the unstructured accounts

Theme	Content
The land	Boundaries, coal, landscape
Identity	Of locale – mining, heavy industry Of miners – below ground / above ground Purpose, Production, Employment, Tradition, Recognition, Pride Respect, Power, Opportunity, Humour
Unity	Friends, Community, Camaraderie, Continuity
Fragmentation	Discontinuity, Dispersal, Above ground, Below ground
Social roles	Men: high profile productive labour; Women – low profile domestic work
Loss	Betrayal, Disposal, Uselessness, Unemployment
The body	Fitness, Strength, Customised ‘machine’, Danger
Health / Illness	Damage to miner’s health from mining practices

4.2.4 Identity of the locale

Three contrasting sub-themes relating to the identity of the locale emerged across the data sets; these were ‘the present’, ‘the past (positive)’ and ‘the past (negative)’. The theme of ‘the present’ emerged from the responses of photo-elicitation interviewees to the question ‘*Would you select the three pictures that you feel most represent the area in which you live?*’. The images at the core of this theme were the rugby ground and the re-landscaped Cwmtillery Lakes. These features represented aspects that have traditionally been important to the locale,

namely sport and the land. The relatively new Abertillery Comprehensive School was considered representative by six of the photo-elicitation interviewees - “*To show that things of interest, nice things, come to Abertillery*” (Jean, older female)

Table 4.9: Would you select the three pictures that you feel most represent the area in which you live?

No. of references	Image	Selected by sub-groups:					
		OM n=4	OF n=3	MM n=4	MF n=2	YM n=2	YF n=3
8	Rugby ground	4	1	1	1	1	0
7	Lakes	3	1	3	0	0	1
6	Abertillery Comprehensive School	0	0	0	2	2	2
5	Church Street shops	1	1	1	0	1	1
	Tillery Valley Foods	1	1	0	2	1	0
4	Tesco	1	0	1	0	1	1
	Doll's House pub	1	0	0	1	2	0

Key: OM = Older male MM = Middle male YM = Younger male
OF = Older female MF = Middle female YF = Younger female

The theme of ‘the past’ competed with that of ‘the present’. It related directly to how community members feel that they have been recognised by those living outside the Abertillery locale. Participants selected seven images of traditional views of valley communities to describe how they considered Londoners see the Abertillery locale. Five of these represented heavy industry (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Which pictures do you think someone from London would choose to represent this area?

No. of references	Images	Selected by sub-groups					
		OM n=4	OF n=3	MM n=4	MF n=2	YM n=2	YF n=3
12	Cwmtillery wheel	2	1	4	2	1	2
	Rose Heyworth wheel	4	0	3	2	1	2
5	Rugby ground	2	0	1	1	1	0
4	Mosaic (metal working)	0	0	3	1	0	1
	Six Bells mining monument	0	0	2	1	0	1
	Mosaic (mining)	0	0	2	0	1	1
	Pigeon cotts	2	0	1	0	0	1

Aligned with these selections were those images photo-elicitation interviewees would use to represent their locale to an outsider. Although they had previously selected *non-mining* images as representative of their locale, in response to the question ‘Which images would you use to represent your locale to an outsider?’ twelve of the eighteen participants selected at least one image related to mining (Table 4.11).

Table 4.11: Which images would you use to represent your locale to an outsider?

No. of references	Images	Selected by sub-groups					
		OM n=4	OF n=3	MM n=4	MF n=2	YM n=2	YF n=3
12	Cwmtillery wheel	3	1	3	2	0	3
	Cwmtillery lakes	1	2	4	2	1	2
8	Church Street shops	1	1	3	0	0	3
6	Mosaic (train station)	2	0	2	1	0	1
	Mosaic (mining)	0	0	2	1	0	3
5	Roseheyworth wheel	1	0	2	0	0	2
4	Vivian pumping station (site of Vivian colliery)	1	1	1	0	0	1

When talking of the Abertillery locale, many participants conveyed a sense of community identity established in the past, with the emphasis upon a well-defined locale based on purpose, productivity and pride. The inclusion of the ‘mining’ images as those with which participants would represent the locale strongly indicated a powerful relationship between the landscape, past industrial practices and the identity of the locale.

However, across the data sets there were both generational and sex-group differences in both the pattern of selection of mining images and related talk with regard to the identity of the locale. In particular, the theme of identity emerging from older participants in both interview cohorts suggested a need for the acknowledgement of ‘outsiders’ of the richness of the Abertillery landscape and the value of its productive practices. The acknowledgment of the locale by others as a globally recognized, respected and powerful industrial centre was fundamental to the theme of identity of the locale. Comments from the older male

photo-elicitation interviewees who chose 'mining' images included '*That was when we were on the map*' (Adrian). Participants in the unstructured interview stage reported '*We exported coal all over the world*' (Richard) '*We were out there*' (Richard) and '*Welsh coal was good quality coal. It was wanted by everyone*' (David). This prevailing connection with the past was also conveyed by one of the older women, Ellen, who confused past and present tense when she explained: '*We were all pits. Mountains and pits is all that we are really*'. Ellen was talking about identity of the locale here in terms of the surface landscape, but her talk indicated her continuing acknowledgement of the world that had existed under the ground.

A sub-theme, 'struggle', also emerged from older participants. This indicated the difficulties faced by a locale that has suffered the removal of the physical features and practices that defined it. Comments such as '*Struggling to identify itself*' (Adrian) and '*Struggling to create a new impression of itself*' (Ashley) reflected how older participants were experiencing the regeneration of the Abertillery locale.

In contrast, both data sets indicated that for the middle group men the identity of the locale was based predominantly on the present state of dereliction and neglect evident in the centre of Abertillery. For this cohort mining was extremely salient. However, while the focus of the interview were the images of physical features of the locale, the accounts of the middle group men convey a sense of the psychological damage that has been done to a generation of men, through the eradication of the work trajectories that had traditionally been available. The male middle group participants selected images representing physical decline. Their comments included '*embarrassing*', '*forgotten*' and '*overlooked*' reflecting both the physical decline of the town and their lost opportunities.



Photograph 4.5: Market Street

For the younger participants of the photo-elicitation interviews, issues of identity did not centre on the locale, but on the individual. A sex-group difference was that two of the three young women selected images of mining as those with which they would represent the locale to an outsider, compared to neither of the young men. To represent the locale to an outsider, the members of this group invoked the widest range of categories, including recreation, shopping, beauty, education, sport and religion. For these participants, education rather than mining was related to 'identity'. In contrast to both the older and middle groups, the foundation of 'identity' for younger participants was neither the past nor the present, but the future. For this group 'identity' was associated with personal achievement, choices and ambitions rather than 'locale' or 'community'. All but one of the younger participants of the study spoke of their plans to achieve further education or training as a way to live and work outside the locale in the future.

Table 4.12: Summary of 'Identity of Locale'

Generation	Sex-group	Identity of the locale related to....
Older	Men	The past – Mining (positive)
	Women	The past – Mining (positive) The present - Beauty
Middle	Men	The past – Mining (negative) The present - Decline
	Women	The present – Decline (amenities) The present – Beauty (landscape)
Younger	Men	The future - Education
	Women	The past – Mining (neutral - historical) The future - Education

4.2.5 Above ground / below ground

A theme differentiating between life above ground and below ground emerged from the unstructured interview accounts of the ex-miners. Although these were just two of the unstructured interview participants, this theme was an extremely powerful one and one that was connected with other themes, such as mining, landscape and identity of the locale. At the core of 'above ground / below ground' were membership of an elite group who possessed embodied knowledge and participated in high status practices involving expert knowledge of equipment, techniques, and a specialised technical language. Within this theme group membership involved a shared understanding of an isolated world beneath the landscape of the locale that was immersed in the physicality of the interaction between man and the land. Below ground miners united to form a specialised and productive system and this cohesiveness endowed miners with a sense of power. Routines and practices below ground had meanings that could not be fully understood by those above ground. However, the mining community hidden below ground is that which is most recognised by the outside world.

The strenuous dangerous nature of work in the mines, and the resistance of the miners to physical harm endowed them with a strong sense of masculinity. It was this masculinity that came to underpin the identity and traditional social roles of the locale. 'Below ground' also included a sense of camaraderie that coalesced around both danger and productivity. The 'below ground' theme specifically emphasised the extreme salience of danger to miners, along with their unique understanding of the ever-present risk of physical harm or death underground. Such danger was acknowledged and resisted through routine physical safety practices. Care was taken to work within sight and sound of others, and each man was prepared to rescue fellow miners.

The accounts of middle group and younger men and women strongly indicated the distance that had grown between 'above ground' and 'below ground' over time. This loss of the below ground world was clear within the accounts of the ex-miners. It was exemplified by Richard's concern regarding the disconnection of later generations from the locale's industrial history:

"I do go up Cwmtillery Lakes with the dog now. Yesterday I went up there, taking the dog round the pond, and you can see all of the red water running out of these ponds and that, it's all coming out of the, where the pits was look. Bound to come up and up and up and it runs out. You could tell straight away you know. It's old workings. Youngsters now wouldn't know what it was"

4.2.6 The Body, The Hands and The Mind

Three related themes, 'the body', 'the hands' and 'the mind' emerged in most of the accounts across both data sets. 'The body' - a particularly salient theme, emerged in six of the photo-elicitation interviews with men and three of the unstructured accounts, also with men. 'The body' involved a strong connection to both the land and the features of the locale through the embodiment of traditional masculine roles related to production. The body carried meanings related to hegemonic masculinity; strength, ability, control and power, along with embodied

knowledge of work practices that have been particularly salient within the locale. While job-related skills training featured within the theme, there was a strong emphasis upon 'physical learning' - learning through doing and through the subsequent shaping of the body to become increasingly fit for purpose. For these men 'learning' is strongly related to 'becoming' (e.g. a miner or a builder).

Within this theme, the body was a customised and valued tool that forges and maintained a relatively high status role within the community regarding the productivity of the locale. This productivity was recognized globally and related directly to the identity of the locale. Thus the mining body carried an extremely high value within this mining community, with health and fitness of particular importance.

'The body' as it related to industry also carried a high value outside of the work context, due to the continued health and fitness of those who undertook such strenuous labour on a daily basis. Such a high value was placed upon the healthy, fit body that illness or damage to the body could have extreme and enduring results. The pervading danger of industrial workplaces, along with the necessity for knowledge of safety procedures was at the forefront of notions of 'the purposeful, working body'. The body as it was related to industrial practices was the physical manifestation of both masculine identity within the locale and also the industrial identity of the locale itself as valued by the world as a productive community. All alternative and subsequent identities had been compared to this.

An alternative theme emerged to that of the working body – this was the 'sporting body'. Both those with backgrounds in heavy industry and those whose working lives had been spent undertaking work of the mind stressed the importance of rugby as a local sporting tradition. This highlighted notions of masculine power related to the construction of the identity of the locale. The photo-elicitation interviews illustrated the importance of Abertillery Rugby Ground to men and women of all three generations. Sporting activities, whether school or community based were salient in terms of high status. Sport was strongly connected to the identity of the locale through notions of the fit, healthy body as a pre-requisite for a working life spent in heavy industry. The sporting body was equally important

to the older men irrespective of whether they had a manual or non-manual working background, suggesting that sport provided alternative access to hegemonic masculinity. This benefit was further suggested by the photo-elicitation interviews, which indicated a distinction between the 'sporting' body and the 'exercised' body. Whereas team sports suggested 'community', mutual aims and shared experience, the exercised body had no useful purpose, was not productive. This notion was supported by the fact that the local leisure centre was not at the core of any of the themes across the data sets; it was the working body that had salience, the leisure body did not.

While the sporting body had some salience for those older men who had not participated in the practices of heavy industry, 'work of the mind' was considerably more important to their accounts than 'work of the body'. 'Work of the mind' emerged to present white-collar work as superior to physical, dirty dangerous work. Work of the mind was also related to success in education, which was recognised as an elevation from the mundane, bodily labour of the locale. Here the opposing facets of 'high status' in the locale were evident. Manual labour in the coal mines had constructed the identity and initial high regard of the locale. However, for men who had never worked below ground, education competed to present 'work of the mind' as more attractive, particularly when the risks to health and life decreased the attractiveness of working below ground.

For older women the rugby-playing body was a traditional element of the locale, however, like the working body, the sporting body belonged to men, and the women were distanced from this. However, the value of the male body within the locale was evident in the women's acceptance of traditional, gendered social roles. Even though women's bodies had produced generations of industrial workers, the female body was not considered 'productive' as was the male body. Women's physical work entailed repetitive domestic tasks that provided a service rather than a material product. This physical work was centred on work of the hands. Women's engagement in relatively menial, low paid, low status part-time employment included shop work, the food industry and small scale manufacturing of items of much less value than coal and steel.

'The body' also emerged in the accounts of the middle generation men. However, it represented something far less desirable than it did for the older men. The discontinuity caused by the collapse of heavy industry underpinned both a negative sub-theme relating to work of the body, namely low status labouring, and connected negatively with 'work of the hands' as menial manufacturing jobs. However, while manufacturing work was undesirable, the labour related to heavy industry that was so valued by past generations was viewed as having been equally unattractive, even exploitative. This cohort acknowledged, but attempted to reject 'work of the body' in favour of 'work of the mind'. As a result even relatively low ranking clerical positions within the Abertillery locale obtained value. These men all connected with the locale through the sporting body – the re-assembling of Abertillery Rugby Club had once again put the town on the map. For women members of the middle generation however, the themes of 'the body' and 'the hands' had no salience at all. For this group 'work of the mind' was most salient.

There were gender differences in the salience of 'the body' for the younger generation. While only 'the sporting body' was salient to young female participants, both the 'sporting body' and 'the purposeful, working body' were salient to younger men. However, the working body for this generation was strongly related to life above ground and outside of the locale. Like the middle generation, the younger male participants rejected the manual labour currently available in the Abertillery locale, however, rather than aligning with 'work of the mind', these young men had found alternative ways of relating to the enduring theme of the body as purposeful, through physical, respected work. However, for this generation 'the body' had become disconnected from the physical landscape. For these men the military services had replaced the coalmines, and pursuit of the status, fitness and respect that were so powerfully related to the body in the Abertillery locale now entailed either permanent or temporary migration from the locale.

The 'purposeful, working body' had no salience for the younger women. However, the theme of 'the sporting body' emerged from their accounts to differing degrees. Three cited local rugby as important to the locale, while two

spoke of strong participation in sporting activities. However, for these women the emphasis was not on the fit strong body, but the enjoyment of taking part in team activities. This stressed again the importance of social relationships to women. The main theme emerging in all five of the young women's accounts was 'work of the mind' as necessary for progression in both career and lifestyle.

Table 4.13 Summary of 'The Body, The Hands and The Mind'

	Purposeful Working Body	Sporting Body	Work of the Hands	Work of the Mind
Older Men Background in heavy industry	Salient Health Fitness Connected to land	Salient The male body Teamwork Strength Recognition	Less salient	Not salient
Older Men No background in heavy industry	Not salient	Related to tradition	Not salient	Salient
Older Women	Salient Distanced from land	Salient The male body Related to tradition	Salient Women's work	Not salient
Middle Men	Salient - Negative	Salient	Salient - Negative	Salient
Middle Women	Not salient	Not salient	Not salient	Salient
Younger Men	Salient Disconnected from landscape	Salient Related to tradition	Not salient	Not salient
Younger Women	Not salient	Varying salience	No salience	Salient

4.2.7 *Health and Ill health*

A theme that related strongly to that of the body, the hands and the mind was 'health and illness', with six of the Abertillery participants speaking of ill health. While two women did not elaborate other than to state that it prevented them from pursuing employment, the remaining four all related ill health to their locale. The core of this theme was based upon expectations surrounding notions of masculinity in the Abertillery locale, and the accounts of four of the participants made reference to harsh working conditions in the coalmines and the physical damage done to men working underground.

There was a distinction between physical and mental ill health. Emphasis on physical or mental illness was affected by both gender and participation in mining. Mary (older group) focused on the physical injuries experienced by miners, while Jeremy's (middle group) emphasis was upon his mental breakdown resulting from the mental stress of not following his father into the mines. However, the two ex-mineworkers spoke of both physical damage and mental ill health. For these older men, hegemonic masculinity within the locale was based so strongly upon the fit and able body that they had experienced a powerful maladaptive mental response to their inability to continue working as miners.

4.2.8 *Unity and Fragmentation*

Related themes of 'Unity' and 'Fragmentation' emerged from the accounts of the participants across both data sets.

Unity

The interviews indicated that 'unity' was strongly related to 'mining', and it emerged most strongly in the accounts of participants in the older group. For the older generation, the theme of unity was related to the sense of pride and respect that mining had once provided the community. Photo-elicitation interviewees selected mining images as the foundation for this theme. However, there was a

generational difference regarding selection of mining images and elaboration of the theme. The salience of 'unity' for community members had decreased over time. The unstructured accounts also indicated generational differences in the salience of a sense of local unity/community.

The accounts of the older men and women suggested that mining had created a sense of community in which family, friends and neighbours lived and worked alongside each other, and looked out for each other both above and below ground. The dangerous practices of mining undertaken below ground had constructed a community that made the locale above ground a safe place to live. The accounts provided a sense of the Abertillery locale as self-supporting, enabling people to live, work and shop within the borders of the locale. For older participants a true sense of 'community' belonged to the past, associated with the mining activities of the locale. The salience of 'unity' for the older participants was a sense of loss, through the comparison of past and present – '*How good it used to be*' (Jim) and '*I don't know more than three families in this street any more*' (Ron).

The accounts of the middle group suggested a very different sense of 'unity'. Any sense of 'unity' related to the shared experiences of a particular generation of local men who had experienced loss of opportunity and lack of employment alongside expectations of traditional gendered social roles. For this sub-group 'unity' possessed negative connotations, rather than positive. However, from the middle group women a very different sense of 'unity' emerged. Whereas the middle group men experienced unity from the discontinuity created by the industrial rupture within the locale, the women of this group found it in continuity; the continuity of uninterrupted social expectations regarding domestic roles along with increased opportunities for part-time work. While in the past mining had supported gendered social roles and had unified an entire community, its loss has formed a distinction between the men and women of the middle generation.

For the younger participants in both interview cohorts the theme of 'unity' appeared to mean little beyond immediate family and friendship groups. In accordance with a more individual sense of identity suggested by the accounts of the younger people, 'community' and 'unity' held very different meanings for this

group. These meanings had emerged from the transitions undergone by the locale. The communities of young men and women had shrunk to a size that could be maintained in the face of possible, or preferable, migration from the locale.

Table 4.14: Summary of 'Unity

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of theme
Older group	Both	Entire community - gendered social roles Content to remain in locale
Middle group	Men	Discontinuity – loss of opportunity, purpose and identity Not content to remain in locale Difficulty in leaving
	Women	Continuity – gendered social roles Content to remain in locale
Younger group	Both	Restricted to circle of family and friends Not content to remain in locale Outward looking

A theme of 'fragmentation' also emerged in the accounts of all the participants however, again, generational differences were apparent. This theme was particularly salient to the older men and women in both interview cohorts and appeared to stem from a sense of loss of the traditional activities that supported a way of life that had defined the community and held it together. The accounts of older interviewees focused on the loss of productivity, purposeful activity, recognition and pride that had accompanied the filling in of the mines, and they also made explicit reference to a decline in social values and behaviours.

Fragmentation of the community was also important to the middle group men. Though critical of the mines, they acknowledged the damage the Abertillery

community had undergone as a result of the decline in heavy industry. They spoke of the undermining of traditional gendered social roles and the inability of the locale to support its community. For the middle group women, 'fragmentation' did not appear to be particularly salient; instead for this group a theme of continuity persisted. For this sub-group heavy industry had never been a possible future and the rupture caused by industrial decline did not permeate the accounts of these women as it did the men of the same generation.

Fragmentation did not appear salient to the younger cohort, although the theme was essential to the difference between their accounts and the accounts of the other two groups. The younger men and women conveyed no understanding of the community constructed by heavy industry. Positioning themselves in contrast to the physically rooted older two generations, younger men and women spoke of the future, which necessitated their movement away from the physical landscape. They also conveyed little awareness of the contribution to the fragmentation of the locale their future plans would make. All the younger participants across the data sets imagined futures that waited outside the borders of the locale

Table 4.15: Summary of 'Fragmentation'

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of theme
Older group		Salient Loss of community/way of life Connected to landscape The past - change
Middle group	Men	Salient - loss of opportunity/roles Connected to landscape The present - struggle
	Women	Not salient Continuity of traditional social roles Not connected to landscape The present - continuity
Younger group		Not salient Outward looking Not connected to landscape The future - opportunity

4.2.9 *Loss*

A theme of 'loss' was threaded through the theme of unity and fragmentation. However, 'loss' carried different meanings for different groups of people. This theme was salient for the entire older generation and the men of the middle generation, while it had little or no salience for the middle group women and the younger participants.

For the older generation across the data sets 'loss' related to the decline of mining and all that it had bestowed upon the locale, such as employment, values, recognition, wealth, community cohesion, local traditions, and a sense of individual and communal purpose and pride. The loss or decline of local amenities also featured highly within this theme, particularly the deterioration of the town. For older generation men and women the loss of mining had resulted in damage to the community. While the machines, buildings and dirt of the coal industry had dominated the physical landscape for many lifetimes, it is the more recent decline and deterioration resulting from its loss that has become a major regret for older people.

A theme of loss also emerged from the accounts of middle group men in both cohorts. There were some differences between these accounts and those of the older cohort regarding the meanings of 'loss'. The middle generation did not feel the loss of mining in terms of the loss of a community; indeed this age group had spoken extremely negatively of mining. However, the removal of the collieries was strongly implicated for these men as the cause of unemployment and the gradual withdrawal of amenities from the town. While for the older generation 'loss' related to the disintegration of a past way of life, for the middle generation it related to the theft of possible futures. Although the middle generation of men had not intended entering the mines, their accounts suggested that the removal of the practices that had constructed and supported embodied masculinity in Abertillery had disrupted the continuity of male identity in the locale resulting in struggle for these men.

Table 4.16: Summary of ‘Loss’

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of theme
Older	Both	Salient – Past way of life
Middle	Men	Salient – Possible futures
	Women	Not salient
Younger	Both	Not salient

4.2.10 Decline and Deterioration

‘Decline and deterioration’ was a theme that powerfully contrasted with ‘Beauty of the landscape’, and one that permeated both data sets. This theme was constructed through the participants’ references to the physical degeneration of considerable parts of the town, and the decline of opportunity. Again the responses to the photo-elicitation interviews related to both visual and subjective elements of this theme.

Table 4.17: Decline and Deterioration: visual and subjective elements

Theme	Element of theme	Participants comments
<u>Decline and Deterioration</u>	<i>Visual</i>	Deterioration Decrepit Neglected Rundown Ugly Eyesore Dump Dereliction Vandalism
	<i>Subjective</i>	Embarrassing Forgotten Poor Sadness Deprived Depressed Hopelessness Stagnation Overlooked Dismissed Struggle Struggling to identify itself Struggling to create a new impression of itself Nothing here Change (negative context) Limited

Six of the ten negative visual' descriptions, and ten of the sixteen negative subjective comments were provided by men of the middle generation. The remainder of the negative visual comments were made by one middle group female participant, one older male and two older females. The visual comments were elaborated upon in terms of the lack of financial investment afforded Abertillery. The remainder of the negative subjective comments were all made by older respondents (2 older males and 2 older females), and suggested a theme of 'struggle'. This pattern was supported by the accounts of the participants in the unstructured interview stage.

The middle group participants felt strongly that the locale had undergone severe decline, while all four older men spoke of the decreased opportunities and the fragmentation of community; both older and middle group community members described a decreasing cohesiveness within the community, a phenomena evidenced by references to out-migration in the accounts of the younger participants in both interview cohorts. The accounts of these younger community members did not suggest a sense of ‘loss’ for something they had never experienced; neither did they suggest a ‘struggle’ to project a future. Instead education was seen as the way forward for this sub-group, easing their trajectories. However, the focus on education, seen by national and local government as the key to regeneration seems to be a cause of fragmentation, as the most highly educated young community members seek lives outside the locale.

Table 4.18: Strands emerging from ‘Decline and Deterioration

Strands	Content of strand
Loss	Opportunity Positive recognition Identity
Struggle	Construction of new identity Re-creation of purpose
Fragmentation	Dispersal of workforce Outward focus of young – Education Demise of community identity

4.2.11 Schooling

The umbrella theme ‘education’ elicited responses that identified three particularly salient themes: ‘schooling’, ‘teachers’ and ‘real world education and learning’. ‘Schooling’ was a major theme in both the photo-elicitation and unstructured interviews, and covered a range of topics including school systems, rules, routines, practices, expectations, traditions, and people.

The photo-elicitation interviews identified gender differences within the groups regarding the salience of different levels of schooling. While older men cited primary school as the most important to their lives in contrast to the older women's citing of secondary level schooling, the pattern for the middle group was reversed. However, the younger generation all cited secondary school as being the most important education institution in their lives. The accounts of the unstructured interviews supported these patterns, with the exception of those of the middle group women, who selected further education, not primary, as being of more importance to their lives.

Table 4.19: Which type of education institution has been most important to your life?

Education	Older Men	Older Women	Middle Men	Middle Women	Younger Men	Younger Women
Primary	3			2		
Secondary		3	4*		2	3*
Further	1					1*
Higher			1*			
Total in sub-group	4	3	4	2	2	3

[* Two of the participants cited more than one education institution as having been equally salient to their lives]

▪ *Primary schooling*

Primary education was considered most important by only two of the sub-groups in the photo-elicitation interviews. It was presented as an institution that provided basic skills, such as reading, writing and arithmetic, but otherwise placed little pressure upon young children. For older men, regardless of subsequent educational trajectory, primary was considered of most benefit to children due to the necessity of learning basic skills, while for middle group women, primary

school was the place where young children forge friendships and are allowed to play.

Primary education was extremely salient for two of the older male participants in the unstructured interview cohort. Their accounts were more detailed and presented primary school as a place where children were labelled, segregated and their futures all but decided by teachers. Primary school was a place where children learned at an early age whether they were expected to succeed academically and what future social role they were likely to play.

- *Grammar schooling*

A number of generational differences were expected in the accounts of secondary schooling due to the different school systems in operation in the Abertillery locale over time. Older men and women had attended either grammar or secondary school. From the accounts of ex-pupils, the grammar system had served its students by both delivering a solid education for high achieving young people and fervently defending its reputation through the academic and sporting achievement of pupils.

For these participants grammar school represented a different world from that constructed by the locale, one that was provided and operated by outside forces and designed to serve a 'different' type of young person, one who would either leave the locale or take up a prominent position within it. In these accounts an undercurrent of expectation, responsibility and pressure remained salient. Grammar school education allowed entry to a different world than for those in secondary school, but was experienced by the participants as equally restrictive.

The accounts suggest that grammar school is remembered as a place where those entering the system were expected to achieve academically and pursue professions, particularly teaching careers. Grammar school was presented as a place where children were labelled and those who would become teachers favoured. It was also presented as an institution that emphasised social class.

Grammar school children were expected to rise above others within the locale, and although equally able, those whose aspirations involved practices representative of the locale, such as engineering or secretarial work did not receive the guidance and attention enjoyed by more academic students. The success of the grammar school system depended on the ability of the children to adapt to a world in which the dominant values of the locale, based in heavy industry and hard manual labour, had little salience. Children who remained strongly connected to the Abertillery locale reported feeling discarded by the school. Thus success in the grammar system often necessitated a distancing from material, symbolic and social aspects of the locale, as evidenced by Mary's account:

"I don't care what you say. It's who you mix with. If you get in with the right group, well, I think if you're a high flyer sometimes you can be a little bit isolated from your friends."

- *Secondary schooling*

In contrast, there was a difference in the salience of education for older participants who had attended secondary school. From age eleven, children understood how they were valued by the education system and what their life trajectories were likely to be, for example, Malcolm (unstructured interviews):

'The eleven plus was the most divisive, evil thing. You had failure stamped on your forehead for life.'

The accounts presented a picture of education/schooling as a system that served the needs of the locale through a focus on local employment rather than young people's individual abilities and ambitions. For these men and women of the older group, school had been a place where traditional practices served to isolate and alienate disadvantaged children. Children had been overlooked, ignored or dismissed, and had come to understand education as not relevant to their lives. While secondary schools identified the relatively few high achievers and focused on these, as did grammar schools, this entire sub-group conveyed a sense of missed chances and negative labelling: *'I got lost, it wasn't their fault, the classes*

were so big.’ (Richard), *‘It was a total waste of time. They missed my ability, thought I was stupid’* (Malcolm).

While grammar schooling was sited within, but distanced from the locale and its values and practices, secondary schooling was closely connected to these. The children attending secondary school were expected to remain in the locale and perpetuate traditional masculine and feminine patterns of working practices. Secondary schools supported gendered social roles both through the curriculum and through its links with local industry, which involved school trips down the local mines for boys. In contrast to that of the grammar school, the nature and purpose of secondary schooling was to prepare people for non-academic work in the locale. It endorsed a sense that academic education possessed very little ‘real’ value and did not relate to what local people expected to do with their lives.

Schooling was viewed very differently by the middle group. The dramatic changes in the employment structure in and around the locale had shifted the focus regarding education. However, the change to comprehensive schooling was not considered a useful development. The image of Abertillery Comprehensive had featured strongly in the photo-elicitation interviews with both the middle and younger groups. It was selected as one of the images considered most representative of the locale, and one that most related to people’s lives. However, as the interviews progressed it became clear that the inclusion of the school represented more than ‘education’. The accounts suggested that this building was considered a modern and attractive aspect of the locale.

Abertillery Comprehensive was selected by only two of the five men in the middle generation as indicative of the education provided in the locale. However, the accounts of all the middle group men in both interview cohorts suggest that education was more salient for this generation, as they could no longer rely on the prior post-school safety net of the coalmines. Overall, comprehensive schooling was considered by both men and women in this age group to have served the children of the locale badly. Whereas the grammar and secondary schools had prepared their pupils for the futures expected of them, comprehensive schools did not provide a sense of trajectory for young people, particularly boys. An

impression was created of an institution that struggled to find a useful role in the Abertillery locale, with all the men and women in this group describing school subjects as largely irrelevant to 'real' life. A contradiction was evident in the men's accounts, one that also emphasised a sex-group difference. Even though this generation retained fundamentally negative evaluations of the adequacy of comprehensive schooling to prepare children for the future, three of the five men in the middle generation had undertaken some type of post-compulsory education that had stemmed from their initial schooling. This was in marked contrast to the women. While two women had undertaken post-compulsory education at college, this was conveyed as compensating for the inadequacies of comprehensive schooling.

The sub-theme 'social class' emerged again in the accounts of both men and women as the middle group evoked memories of exclusion from activities due to lack of funds. Subject choices and behaviours based on remaining close to the security and companionship of social peers were also related to class. For example, Juliet:

"I didn't really take to any of the kids in the class. They all were like, top achievers but they were also, came from, um, I don't know like, well to do families. They, I just didn't really, didn't relate with them. So, I went down a level in school then. Disappointed my family and everything 'cause, but uh, um, I was more comfortable, in the class below with, my peers then."

'Friendship' also emerged as an important sub-theme related to secondary schooling. The accounts of the men of the middle generation highlighted the consequences of friendship groups in terms of both confidence and enjoyment of school, and also isolation, bullying and fearfulness. However, for women of all generations in both interview cohorts, the importance of school as a site for the formation and maintenance of social relationships was emphasised through accounts relating to the formation of identity:

"You start dating and that's your future decided."

(Hazel, older group)

“Where you develop into the person you will be in life.”

(Melissa, middle group)

“You make your friends and it’s where you find yourself.”

(Sarah, young group)

The social nature of school was echoed in the accounts of the younger male participants. The selection of the image of Abertillery Comprehensive by the younger men presented school as a cohesive force in a locale offering little for young people: ‘*The only things to do*’ (Neil, waiting to enlist in RAF); ‘*All there is*’ (Liam, soldier); ‘*I’ll have to move to a large city, start at the bottom of a big company and work my way up*’; ‘*It’s a way out...*’ (Stuart, A level student).

However, the accounts of all five younger women elicited themes that related powerfully to the importance of education and individual responsibility. Although three of the five were still attending school as A level students (the remaining two left following compulsory schooling), which could have influenced the type of account elicited, all five accounts were similar in that the women all stressed education as the way to achieve in life. These women also all stressed the importance of friendship groups at school, and also emphasised the role of education in their imagined futures away from the locale.

All four A level students (3 females, 1 male) were attending schools outside the immediate locale, as Abertillery Comprehensive does not provide education past age sixteen. Additionally, Sarah, the photo-elicitation interviewee had moved to a Roman Catholic school after a year of secondary schooling at Abertillery Comprehensive. Sarah stated:

“Here I wouldn’t have gone very far. They didn’t give me the confidence or hope. They don’t push you to do your work.”

4.1.12 Schoolteachers

The topic of schoolteachers emerged mainly in the unstructured interviews, and generational differences were evident. Rather than a single dominant theme, three distinct sub-themes emerged. When schoolteachers were mentioned in the photo-

elicitation interviews, these same sub-themes emerged. The older men presented a very powerful picture of teachers who did not serve the children, but instead perpetuated the dominant traditions of the locale. Within this sub-theme teachers prepared working class boys to become miners or steelworkers and they were allowed to disengage from education at an early age.

The accounts suggested that in secondary school, teachers dealt with large class sizes by labelling children early and paying selective attention to those most likely to succeed, often ignoring children who required help:

“There was too many kids still in a lot of the other classes and you wasn’t pushed. If, you know, if you didn’t ‘have it’, you know you, they wouldn’t push it. Well they couldn’t, there was too many in the class and that was that, and if you need that extra bit it just wasn’t there because there was too many kids in the class.”

(Richard, unstructured interviews)

Teachers were often dismissive, disrespectful and sometimes unkind to boys who were not expected to achieve within education, which powerfully restricted the ways children were able to imagine their futures:

“I can remember never ever being encouraged by any of the teachers. They would always give you something to do, and they would always point at the negative, all negatives init you know? I now know looking back how, how, how wrong they was and how, really, there’s none of them, could ever see the potential in me.”

(Malcolm, unstructured interviews)

For the older generation, teachers did not adapt education to people’s personal trajectories. The sub-theme emerging from older men and women was one in which teachers taught and children attended school until they were old enough to leave compulsory education and follow gendered pathways. School teachers perpetuated traditional social roles by de-emphasising career pathways for women in the Abertillery locale.

A very different sub-theme emerged from the middle generation. Whereas older participants described teachers as perpetuating local work traditions through their

teaching practices, the men and women of the middle group presented teachers as disconnected from the practices and lifestyles of the locale. All three unstructured interview participants described schoolteachers as '*out of touch*' or '*not real*'. They felt that the majority of teachers taught subjects that had no relevance to the lives of local people – to the 'real life' world inhabited by community members. The world inhabited by schoolteachers was 'other' and could not be made sense of nor entered by the majority of local children. Like the older participants, the middle generation were aware of the favouring of academically able children, to the disadvantage of those who could not excel. For example "*They just let us get on with it by ourselves*" (Kirsten). Across both older and middle age groups it was felt that teachers particularly betrayed children of average ability. Many of the interviewees had felt that with help and encouragement, they might have achieved much more.

The sub-theme that emerged from the younger unstructured interview participants was again very distinctive, and it contrasted with the view of teachers that emerged in the accounts of the other groups. They spoke about how well specific teachers were able to relate to young people, how well they could understand youth culture and communicate with young people about non-school interests. For the younger group this was seen as crucial to their own engagement with education. The time teachers spent with each student, regardless of the nature of the interaction, was seen as an evaluation of their capabilities and worth. This view was supported by the younger photo-elicitation interviewees who, in contrast to the unstructured interview participants, had not undertaken non-compulsory education. Unlike the other age groups, the younger participants did not see teachers as wholly responsible for their education; instead they placed some blame on themselves if they did not achieve at school, for example, Neil:

'I got into trouble in the first year [of secondary schooling] and after that the teachers didn't bother with me, didn't understand really. I should've worked harder after that, but they labelled me, didn't think I was worth bothering with.'

With the exception of Neil, the younger people described teachers as inspiring and enthusiastic about their subjects. The accounts suggested that rather than being

limited by the demands of the locale, teachers were guided by the ability levels of the students. Teachers were seen by all younger participants as ‘real world’ people. It cannot be ignored that the inclusion of a high percentage of A level students is likely to have elicited accounts based on positive experiences of formal schooling and teachers in general. However, a further contributing factor could be that for this participant group the real world is no longer restricted to the materiality of the locale. For the older two participant groups ‘the school’ was understood and positioned very differently from the ways that young people now make sense of schooling and their relationships with teachers. The role of the schoolteacher is seen as that of facilitator, with teachers making connections between their school subjects and a wider world full of opportunity. In this way teachers encourage young people with a range of abilities, by emphasising the relevance and value of school subjects to the construction of valued education and career pathways. The ability of teachers to introduce students to their own wider world is seen as enormously encouraging for a generation who have the physical and symbolic means to look outside their locale.

4.2.13 ‘Real world’ teaching and learning

A strong theme of ‘real world teaching and learning’ emerged in the accounts of all three generations in both cohorts, and included college courses, formal apprenticeships and on-the-job training. However, again, generational and gender differences emerged in the accounts.

For older men, although the schools guided their entry into real world occupations, specific school subjects and education practices were presented as isolated from real world activities. School teaching was not considered ‘real world’ teaching. For this cohort, ‘real world’ teaching and learning took place after they had left school. Apprenticeships relating to heavy industry in the locale dominated this theme, and included both attendance at college and learning from more experienced colleagues at work. College teachers were people with working backgrounds in heavy industry, such as mining, metalworking, engineering and the construction industry. The knowledge, skills, praise and encouragement

received from these men were greatly valued. However, for older people it was the on-site teaching by older colleagues that was particularly relevant, for example, how skills learned in college could be applied within a specific work setting:

“We had to learn how things operated, and the older electricians perhaps would be underground and you’d have a slack period. They’d be drawing on a shovel. They’d have a piece of chalk and they’d be drawing it. Len was a, he was an apprentice, he was the older apprentice. He went through.....we used to do our homework on the floor, shop floor with chalk.”

(David)

Learning through hands-on experience was considered the only way to gain new knowledge and skills:

“You were on the tools straight away. You wouldn’t, they would allow you to stand back. ‘Get hold of this and do this...do what I’m doing...follow’...practical experience straight away. The Coal Board, if you were there you were a part of it, you know you did, you learned a lot quicker I think, in that respect, that’s the type of, if your talking about the fifties and sixties.”

(David)

The relevance of learning practical skills rather than achieving academic success was emphasised as beneficial to life in the ‘real world’. For example, Malcolm:

“I applied to go on a government training course, to do brick laying, and as I applied for this course so did a lot of other people who passed the eleven plus, from the grammar school. So the training course was largely practical stuff, which I’ve, I’ve been doing since a very young age. I was into all this kind of, doing, with my hands type of thing. In my own mind they were like, really like in a social strata that was senior to me because they passed the eleven plus and I hadn’t you see, and this is how it works. So, so when to see someone who’s passed the eleven plus, you get an involuntary reaction, and all, all of a sudden you see someone that is senior to you because they’ve passed. The lucky break I had, and what, what, what really, kind of leap-frogged me into action, and it started running for me was, all of a sudden now, they’d never done anything practical. So I started and I was always weeks and weeks ahead all the time. I was always in front. I was always, and then if, on some days maybe the instructor was off ill or he was busy he’d ask me ‘Would you take this lesson today and could you help these people, because as they’re weeks

behind, you need to slow down anyway?’ And so then I realised that ‘no, no, no, no, no’. I wasn’t dull. It just didn’t suit me on that day. That test on that day didn’t suit me. All of a sudden now my street cred is all coming back now. All of a sudden now I’m top dog.”

In the accounts of the older men, non-compulsory formal education was only deemed relevant if it was also associated with the real world in terms of the work-related qualifications required for career progression. Routes included financial advising, the law, and school and college teaching, and also voluntary work later in life. Richard’s food hygiene course was only deemed relevant due to his work in the local museum cafeteria.

Older women also presented real world learning as strongly related to the locale. Two of the four referred to the potential relevance of college courses to possible careers, with one succeeding in secretarial college. However, neither pursued a career due to marriage and motherhood. Instead, for older women the overriding sub-theme was learning to succeed in the field of domesticity and attaining the ability to support husband and children in their endeavours. On-the-job training had relevance only in terms of menial, part-time jobs, many of which drew upon women’s existing domestic skills (e.g. sewing, cooking and cleaning). Thus the learning gained in the home was extended into the world of work, a stark contrast to the men who were members of two exclusive worlds, home and work.

The theme of ‘real world teaching and learning’ emerging from the accounts of the middle generation was equally powerful. All emphasised the value of ‘learning on the job’ and of college courses that related directly to employment. Like Malcolm, they also stressed the importance of personal experience, for example, Juliet, a community worker:

“I’ve learnt a hell of a lot from the real experience of drugs, and being homeless and things like that. So I had an insight into all sorts of things, and I think that was, gave me a massive understanding of what it’s like to live in, deprivation and, uh, and desperation really.”

'Real world' teaching and learning for older men had involved a strong connection to the industrial life of the locale. However, for both men and women in the middle group, following the decline of local industry, 'real' teaching related primarily to the nature of student-tutor interaction. While schoolteachers were not 'real', college tutors were, because they forged connections with the lives of their students. They shared their own experiences and adapted their teaching methods to make learning relevant, even though many of the subjects taught were not specifically related to dominant local employment. For example, college tutors were able to re-introduce students to maths and English because they showed the students respect and acknowledged their life experience.

In the accounts of four of the nine middle group participants (2 women, 2 men 'real world' teaching was again strongly connected to patterns of employment in the locale. However, this time it was connected to the void left by extensive mine closures, mass redundancies and subsequent restricted employment opportunities. Within this sub-theme, college tutors provided the knowledge and skills required, helping young people to become educated and/or trained, which increased their chances of employment. Real world teaching provided people with the means to succeed in the wider world. Specifically it gave members of the middle group the relevant knowledge and skills to forge careers in non-traditional, non-local fields. 'Real' tutors contributed to the stability of the locale, and the four participants who related 'real world' teaching and learning to their locale had also all taken up roles within the locale that served to improve the locale and the lives of community members.

The younger generation, like the other two, emphasised 'real world' teaching and learning. However, for these participants the real world lay outside of the locale and was accessed through interaction with schoolteachers. Younger participants were much less rooted to the locale than the other generations, and they felt the pull of the outside world much more strongly. For those leaving school at the end of compulsory education, 'real world' teaching and learning began, or was expected to begin, after a person gains employment outside the locale and experiences the wider world.

4.2.14 College

‘College’ emerged as a salient theme across the data sets and was divided by the accounts into three overall sub-themes – academic, work-related skills training and ‘the system’. At the core of the theme was the juxtaposition of ‘headwork’ and ‘handwork’. Academic college courses were those considered to be ‘not real’ and not for everyone; ‘headwork’ was for those who are ‘clever’, evidenced through prior success at school. This was supported by Ron and Mary (older group, unstructured interviews), who both described a two-tier college system, one for those who had attended grammar school and one for those leaving secondary school. In the Abertillery locale, it was the technical college that was considered to be the most relevant to the lives of community members.

Although community members recognized that academic qualifications increased opportunity, employability and status, it was the more practical job-related skills training that featured most strongly within the theme of ‘college’ across the data sets. These courses related directly to local employment and were considered ‘real’ courses, taught by ‘real’ people. Here ‘natural’ practical ability was valued over academic ability, and the skills learned during such courses could be applied throughout life to retain employability.

Particular changes over time were made apparent by the accounts of the different generations. In the accounts of middle and younger group participants, college had become less supportive of the needs of many community members to find local employment. Work related courses, such as hairdressing, nursery nursing, physical training and community work also required a relatively high level of academic input. In particular, two of the middle group participants described a contradiction between their ‘real’ lives and their need to obtain academic qualifications for their chosen work trajectory within the locale.

Among younger participants who wish to stay within the locale, it was accepted that college courses now train high numbers of students for limited numbers of jobs. This serves to discourage the attendance and effort required to succeed within further education. Additionally, while able to interact on a ‘real’ level,

college staff teaching both academic and skills-based subjects were described as unreliable due to their failure to turn up to teach timetabled lessons, which has encouraged some students to leave their courses.

4.2.15 Responsibility for learning

A theme relating to personal responsibility for learning emerged from the accounts of the participants across the two data sets, and generational differences were apparent (Table 4.21). At the core of this theme was the level to which participants felt that they were responsible for their own learning trajectories. Generational differences emerged that relate both to the different education systems offered over time, and the social and economic climate within which education was experienced by community members.

Older participants had not felt any personal responsibility for learning as children. An alternative emphasis upon ‘responsibility for teaching’ was more prominent for these participants, with teachers described as distant and unhelpful. Within this sub-theme, even though many children were expected by teachers to ‘get on with it’, children could not be expected to learn unless the teachers taught them properly, and subsequent failure to achieve or continue with education was attributed to a lack of encouragement at school. Richard (unstructured interviews):

“You wasn’t pushed so much, by them, and things like that you know, and um, we was just going on that way and as you were getting older you found that there was too many kids still in a lot of the other classes and you wasn’t pushed.”

The accounts of both the middle group cohorts suggested personal responsibility for learning was based upon the dramatic economic and social shifts experienced by these participants both before and after leaving compulsory schooling. The education system let them down when they did not respond to the changing needs of young men who were faced with wide scale unemployment within the locale during the time period that they were expected to plan their work trajectories and seek employment. For example, Howard (photo-elicitation interviews):

“School was just something you did. It didn’t really teach us how to do anything particularly useful. There were clerical jobs around when I left school, but it doesn’t relate to history or geography or anything.”

Specifically, with the loss of clear and dominant work pathways for young men, students were expected to forge their own distinctive pathways, thus the responsibility for learning shifted to the individual student. However, historically the needs of the locale for strong bodies to work within heavy industry had underpinned the direction teachers had given to their students, and the loss of this reliable foundation resulted in the removal of sound guidance from teachers. As a result, although young people were made increasingly responsible for their own employability, the loss of strong leadership and advice had left young people struggling to imagine their futures in a world they could no longer fully understand or predict.

The accounts of the younger participants emphasised personal responsibility for education. Two decades of post-industrialisation had prepared this generation for an adulthood that involved forging work trajectories based on personal ability and preference, rather than community requirements and expectation. For this generation the focus was the student’s own responsibility for both imagining a ‘work’ future and gaining of the appropriate education to achieve this. This placed a heavy burden upon young students with relatively little life experience. For example, Lucy (unstructured interviews) on A level subject choices:

“I don’t know whether I’ll give up English or RE, but I don’t know which will be better for a career. I’d like to go to theology college, but I want to be a journalist. I need to decide now but I don’t want to pick the wrong one. I’ll probably carry on doing the four.”

Rather than a distinct disconnected phase through which children must pass before entering an adult world of work, secondary education leading to GCSE examination was understood by this generation as the beginning of the career trajectory, a time when a number of crucial choices must be made. Through effort and the correct choices students could succeed both within education and their subsequent careers. For the younger group, the important aspect was *personal*

responsibility, and they place accountability for their choices, along with their ultimate success or failure upon their own shoulders.

Table 4.20: Summary: Responsibility for learning

Generation	Salience of theme	
Older	Teachers	Responsible for teaching Guide children into conventional work pathways within locale
	Students	Expected, and expect to take up conventional work roles within the local community
Middle	Teachers	Responsible for teaching Fail to guide into alternative work pathways within locale
	Students	Recognise a responsibility for learning No clear work trajectories Lack the imagined futures that could guide choices and effort
Younger	Teachers	Experts regarding possible futures in the outside world Promote variety of available possible futures
	Students	Responsible for learning Looking outside locale for imagined futures Responsible for own education and career choices

4.2.16 Sources of support

The accounts of the interviewees emphasised three main sources of support and encouragement – parents/family, teachers and work colleagues. The participants were explicitly asked to cite major sources of support and encouragement. However, the unstructured interviews elicited extremely similar references to sources of support.

Parents

Parents were the only sources of support to be cited by members of all six participant groups. However, there were both generational and sex-group differences in how these were spoken about. The older men cited fathers as the most significant parental influences, and this involved either facilitation of the participant's transition into heavy industry, or encouragement along alternative, career pathways in order to avoid the manual labour of the collieries. Additionally, the importance of family involvement in mining was evident in the accounts of some of the older unstructured interview participants – grandfathers, fathers and brothers. In contrast only one of the four older women, Jean, made reference to any influence of parents - "*they taught me right from wrong*". The remaining three older women stated explicitly that nobody had supported or encouraged their learning and work trajectories. Mary had actively resisted her family's wishes that she become a teacher, while Hazel and Ellen followed traditional gendered routes:

"You just went with the flow. What else could we do? It was just how things were done in those days."

(Hazel)

"You left school, you had to get a job. It was either gonna be in a shop or a factory. It was a job. It was the way it was. It was a job, in those days. I was probably just about fifteen when I started work. It was just the way."

(Ellen)

Parents also featured in the accounts of five of the nine middle group participants (3 male, 2 female). However, while Rachel's father, an Art teacher played an influential role in her higher education, for this generation in general mothers rather than fathers have become the most significant source of support and encouragement, providing financial aid, childcare assistance, encouraging career ambitions and preparing youngsters for the adult world:

"It was my mother who instilled, you know, what was a sense of right and wrong, you know. She told us the realities of the world and that's that. Go to school, get qualifications."

(Howard).

Mothers were also singled out by the younger generation across the two sex-groups as the major source of support and encouragement. Every member of this group cited one or both parents as the significant influence regarding their projected futures, with five of the eight emphasising the influence of their mothers. In addition to the support mentioned by the middle generation, the younger participants also emphasised the help with schoolwork that their mothers provided, and their encouragement that their offspring leave the locale to achieve a higher level of education.

Additionally, two participants in the middle group and one of the younger generation cited fathers in particularly negative ways:

"My real father, he's never worked. He's just a lazy bastard. Never done anything."

(Kirsten, younger group).

"My father was a very, masculine man. He was a miner and all that entailed. I was never going to be like him. I was a sensitive boy. He didn't like that. He was an atheist, and I think that was a strong part of why I chose to enter the church, to study theology."

(Jeremy, middle group)

“My father was just, crazy, you know, fly off the handle, shout, shout, ball and swear, you know. Violence mostly then like, grabbed me and, uh, um, that wouldn’t work. He’s never gonna change. He’s just an arrogant horrible, horrible man. I don’t respect him whatsoever.”

(Peter, middle group)

Teachers

Strong generational and sex-group differences were also evident with regard to the influence of teachers. None of the older generation cited schoolteachers as either encouraging or supportive, with seven of the twelve making negative references to them. The middle group women also made negative references to teachers, with the exception of Rachel, who had been guided into higher education by an Art teacher.

However, three of the five middle group men also emphasised the influence of teachers who had helped them to project a future career trajectory. Each of the younger generation currently in full-time advanced level schooling also spoke of teachers as encouraging. For all these participants, teachers were the conduit to an adult world outside the locale.

Work colleagues

The accounts indicated that work colleagues were important to some of the older and middle generation men, but were not influential to any of the women in these two groups. Four of the eight older men and two of the five middle group men cited work colleagues as important to the work pathways they had followed. Only one of the younger generation was employed, and this young woman cited her manager as significant to her career development due to the work-related courses she was encouraged to complete.

4.2.17 Work-related education and/or training

A theme of work-related training emerged from many of the accounts across the data sets. With the exception of the younger students still in full-time education, all the participants had experienced some kind of paid employment. From these accounts a strong sub-theme relating to the importance of 'learning on the job' was evident. All the participants spoke of 'learning through doing'. 'Official' learning related to employment was particularly salient for the older men. Richard undertook compulsory training to fulfil his work role as a miner in Six Bells Colliery, including first aid and the use of equipment such as props, 'roof masters' and disc-cutters, while David learned the skills necessary for his role as a mine electrician. Even though three of the older group had gained professional qualifications (in college lecturing, the law, and finance), these had been associated with their existing full-time employment and achieved by them through part-time study. Only three older participants reported any learning episodes undertaken that were not related to the job they had been in at the time. One of the eight older men and one of the four older women reported an episode of non-compulsory training immediately following compulsory schooling - Ron (teaching college) and Mary (secretarial college). Another older man, Malcolm, made redundant at the age of twenty-one, undertook substantial training at his local Skills Centre to pursue a new career as a bricklayer.

There was strong sex-group difference regarding the type of training undertaken and qualifications achieved, and this was associated with traditional social roles. Many jobs available for the men entailed distinct periods of recognised training, such as miner's training, apprenticeships (electrician, engineer) or professional courses (solicitor, financial advisor), while the relatively menial employment widely available for many women (cafes, chip shops, cleaning, bar work and food and clothing factories) involved minimal on the job training that did not lead to qualifications. Hazel, an ex-grammar school student who took up clerical post also reported receiving only the minimal amount of training on the job. If married women took up paid employment it was usually part-time, temporary and changeable.

A sex-group difference was less apparent in the accounts of the middle generation. Learning on the job was relevant to both men and women. However, while one female participant had followed the pattern set by the older generation – part-time employment and motherhood - certified training related to existing employment was also important to both men and women of this generation. Three of the four women and four of the five men reported having undertaken work-related training that involved college attendance and/or in-service courses (e.g. community work, youth work, hairdressing, librarianship). Although schooling had not served this group well, underpinning the theme of ‘work-related education or training’ for them was an acknowledgement of the increased importance of qualifications for obtaining work. They needed to maintain continued employability in a locale no longer supported by its industrial base. For the middle generation the influence of conventional social roles had decreased. Women often combined full-time employment and family commitments. This had led to increased opportunities and expectations regarding women’s job-related education and training.

Four of the eight younger generation participants were still in full-time education and for these participants, job-related education and training involved gaining academic degrees as preparation for a career. The remaining four – two men and two women – described different types of job-related training. Both men had connections with the military. Neil was awaiting the finalisation of his enlistment with the RAF and had prepared through a five-year membership with the RAF cadets - *“The best option, as soon as you realise there’s nothing around in Abertillery. I can learn construction, that I can bring out with me later”*.

Liam, due to leave the army after six years, was preparing for a college course that would enable him to become a personal trainer. The importance of job-related training for these men was similar to that for Richard; training involved physical practices that resulted in embodied knowledge that strongly connected employment and identity; that sense of ‘becoming’ or ‘being’ through doing. In contrast, the focus for younger women was certified qualifications. Although they acknowledged that they learned ‘on-the-job’, their accounts emphasised a need for qualifications if they were to progress in their chosen fields, nursery nursing and office administration. They needed to gain certificates that confirmed both a breadth and depth of continually updated knowledge.

Table 4.21: Salience of ‘Training’

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of ‘Training’
Older	Men	Recognized and certified training attached to relatively high status employment. Mainly compulsory training Manual: Embodied knowledge Non-manual: Qualifications
	Women	Minimal on the job compulsory training associated with menial, often part-time work
Middle	Both	Compulsory and non-compulsory episodes of certified education and training related to career progression or change of employment
Younger	Men	Physical ‘on the job- training Recognised qualifications
	Women	Recognised qualifications

4.2.18 Resistance

A theme of ‘resistance’ emerged from seven of the accounts, six of these from men. Four accounts were from the older generation and these divided the theme into two strands – education and locale. Educational experience had powerfully affected three of the older generation, who had resisted at some point the labelling and expectations of the school system. Both Mary and Ashley had initially rejected the expectations of their grammar schools that they would become teachers. Instead they pursued work pathways in less prestigious fields (engineering and secretarial work). However, both later accepted conventional social roles and trajectories; Ashley became a college lecturer, while Mary married and became a full-time housewife and mother. Conversely, Malcolm had initially accepted the label ‘underachiever’ following his failure of the eleven plus examination. He carried this into his adult life, before realising that he could excel in the field of construction. He had since challenged the authority of the school system to categorise children, and he had gained a range of both trade-related and academic qualifications.

The fourth older participant, Jim, had resisted identifying with many traditional aspects of life in the locale, rather than education. Like many of the younger participants he described the locale as extremely restricted in verbal literacy and outlook. Through self-education Jim had managed to reject what he described as the traditional local lifestyle. However, like his peers he had forged a career and raised a family within the locale and could not envisage moving away from the locale.

Although resistance was not a strong theme for the middle generation, the limitations of the locale emerged in the account of one of this group, as they did in Jim's account. An explicit reference to resistance came from Peter, who had enlisted in the army to escape the unemployment and limitations of the locale, and who found it relatively difficult to relate to friends on his return. However, he continued to resist the life trajectories of his contemporaries through a career choice that distanced him still further. This form of resistance was also employed by the two younger men who took part in the photo-elicitation interviews – and who were both also involved with the military. Neil resisted the limited opportunities afforded by the locale, while Liam rejected both the narrow career prospects in the locale and the stagnant, un-ambitious lifestyles of his former friends:

“I've been in the army six years and now I've got that certain level of respect if you know what I mean. I've got that level of self-respect, you know, I just don't wanna just get out and work in a factory and waste my life. All my friends working in factories doing the same thing everyday, and they're not happy.”

(Liam)

4.2.19 Regrets

The photo-elicitation participants were asked if they had any regrets regarding the pathways they had followed, and if so, what these were. The unstructured interviews were analysed for instances where regret was spoken of. Across the data sets a theme of regret emerged in only eight accounts, seven photo-elicitation interviews and one unstructured interview. Of these, two interviews were from

the older generation, three from the middle and three from the younger generation, and all eight focused upon missed or wasted opportunities regarding education. For these participants education was the route that could have allowed access to a professional career or more opportunity and choice regarding future education and/or employment. The major generational difference was that, while the older and middle generations mourned the loss of careers they feel they will never achieve, due to poor school experiences, the three younger participants feel that they have disadvantaged themselves through wasted education opportunities.

Table 4.22: Regrets

Group	Participant	Regret	Lost opportunity
Older	Hazel	No guidance/encouragement	College lecturer
	Ellen	No guidance/encouragement	Interpreter
Middle	Jeremy	Wrong subject choice at HE level Lost chance of HE (due to illness)	Psychology or philosophy lecturer
	Sam	School grades not good enough	RAF pilot
	Melissa	Left teacher training course – lack of confidence	College tutor - hairdressing
Younger	Neil	Did not work at school	Higher entry level in RAF
	Sarah	Did not work harder	More choice of university for teacher training
	Liam	Should have finished Btech course – classroom work	Extra qualification to use after army service

4.2.20 *The Future*

All participants spoke of the future. However, different sub-themes emerged from the accounts of the three generations of men and women. A sub-theme of generativity emerged from the older men. Although two men were enjoying retirement, six of the eight were engaged in activities that allowed them to contribute something to the lives of younger generations. This was through activities that promoted the preservation of the past, such as voluntary work in the local museum (David and Richard), the church (Theo) or local primary schools (Jim), and through school governorship (Ashley), or the preservation of trade skills (Malcolm). The older women however, saw their own futures as little changed by reaching retirement age. Three of the four had no plans to engage in activities outside of their usual domestic duties. Two explained that they were happy with their lives – e.g. “*I’m living my dream*” (Jean). However, Hazel stated that she is ‘*too old*’ to change her patterns of day-to-day life to develop new activities outside of the home, that she has left it too long.

Like the older community members, all ten of the middle generation saw their futures as set within the Abertillery locale. Four of the five men saw little benefit in engaging in any further episodes of education or training, instead they described themselves as ‘settled’ in patterns of life they expect to continue. None of these men, aged between 34 and 40, could imagine an alternative trajectory other than the one they were already following:

“I’m settled now. I can’t see myself doing anything else, at least for now.”
(Sam)

“I’m too old now. I can’t see anything changing.”
(Alex)

“I’m too lazy and too set in my ways now, because I’ve got no real ambition so what would I do? It would be a waste.”
(Howard)

“Depends what comes up, what I have to do.”
(Jeremy)

The single exception in the middle group was Peter (aged 33) who since his days as a soldier had undertaken considerable academic study to become a youth worker. While feeling that he has reached a current limit he does not rule out further personal development.

For three of the five middle group women, the future was seen in terms of education and training. They accepted that they would be required to engage in further learning episodes, and saw this as beneficial to their careers, for example:

“I’ll need further qualifications to develop my career. Perhaps a youth work degree, through work if I can, I don’t want to leave my job.”

(Rachel)

The younger generation all had clearly imagined futures, and all seven were working towards achieving their aims through engagement with learning at some level. However, while there were in-group differences, these were not due to sex-group but to the level of school education achieved. Academic education was dominant in the futures of the four A level students, however, the remaining three also intended to participate in education and/or training. Liam had already enrolled on a college course to train as a personal trainer, Neil intended to qualify within the RAF in the field of construction, and Amy was learning to co-ordinate a food co-operative in her neighbourhood, with support and training from the local Communities First support group.

Table 4.23: Salience of ‘The future’

Generation	Sex-group	Salience of ‘The future’
Older	Men	‘Teaching’ roles - preservation of local history Retirement / Leisure
	Women	Continuation of domestic life - ‘too old’
Middle	Men	Continuation of employment - ‘too old’
	Women	Education – development of careers/jobs
Younger	A level students	A level examinations followed by degree courses for professional careers
	Non-A level students	Relatively short-term training to achieve either future employability or the ability to participate in local voluntary work

4.3 Ynysawdre: comparisons with the Abertillery themes

Table 4.24: Ynysawdre participants:

Participant group	Unstructured interviews		Photo-elicitation interviews	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<u>Older</u>	Lewis	May		Angela Cassie
<u>Middle</u>	Thomas Philip	Susan		Julie
<u>Younger</u>	Ross	Alice Danielle Stephanie	Luke	Chloe Jodie Kate Olivia Megan Nia Shelley

A thematic analysis was applied to the two data sets collected in Ynysawdre with the specific aim of comparing the themes to those identified in the Abertillery interviews. Three themes that had been important to Abertillery participants did not emerge from the Ynysawdre accounts. These were ‘Above ground/below ground’, ‘Decline and Deterioration’ and ‘Loss’. However, while the majority of the Abertillery themes also emerged in the accounts of Ynysawdre participants, they did not always carry the same meanings that they had for those living in the Abertillery locale.

4.3.1 *Beauty of the Landscape*

The accounts of the Ynysawdre participants indicated that the attractiveness of Ynysawdre was less important to them than the Abertillery landscape was to its residents. Photo-elicitation interviewees did refer to ‘countryside’, ‘mountains’ and ‘valleys’ when considering how outsiders view the Ynysawdre locale, however, no images of local features appeared to be selected on the basis of visual attractiveness as those that most represented the locale or as those people could most relate to.

In contrast to the Abertillery interviews, analysis of the accounts across the data sets indicated that even the older community members related more to relatively modern local features, such as the comprehensive school and the local retail park, and that they felt that these features most represented the locale.



Photograph 4.6: Bryngarw Country House and Park

4.3.2 *Industrial land use*

A theme relating to industrial use of the local land emerged from the accounts of three of the participants taking part in the unstructured interview stage - one in the

‘older’ group and two in the ‘middle’ group. However, unlike the strong mining focus of the Abertillery accounts, the relevance of this theme for Ynysawdre community members was most strongly linked to engineering, construction and light and heavy auto-mechanics. These were industries based *on* rather than under the landscape. Lewis, Thomas and Philip indicated their pride in the strong history of apprenticeships and employment in the motor industry. However, whereas industry had defined the Abertillery locale for the majority of the older generation, and through its decline had remained salient for its middle generation, the accounts of the majority of Ynysawdre residents indicated that industry had not defined the locale, it had merely been one source of employment for men.

4.3.3 Mining

For many of the older and middle group Abertillery men and women mining permeated the accounts of many interviewees regardless of personal participation in mining practices. However, this theme emerged in the account of just two of the Ynysawdre interviewees. For both it was related to their personal experience as mechanics. Both Lewis and Philip had worked as fitters in the coal industry. The importance of the locale to the coal industry was also stressed. Philip emphasised the importance of Tondu as the location of a training centre that served the entire region. Philip’s account will be discussed in the following empirical chapter.

4.3.4 Identity of the locale

The remainder of the Ynysawdre cohort focused much more upon contemporary features of the locale to convey their sense of the identity of the locale. This was a marked contrast to the historical influence running through the accounts of many of the Abertillery participants. Specifically, the participants of the Ynysawdre photo-elicitation interviews emphasised both the present and the future with their selections of images of Ynysawdre Comprehensive School, the nearby McArthur

Glen Retail Outlet and Pandy Park, a local sports venue, as the images that most represented the Ynysawdre locale. For example:

“I’d show them an up-to-date, modern outlook.”

[McArthur Glen Retail Outlet and Abertillery Comprehensive School]

(Cassie)

“The Pines [McArthur Glen Retail Outlet] put us on the map.”

(Chloe)



Photograph 4.7: McArthur Glen Shopping Centre

The Retail Outlet was seen by all three generations to be an amenity that had become familiar to people outside the locale and that has resulted in the Ynysawdre locale becoming ‘known’. Five of the accounts from the unstructured interviews also included mention of the Retail Outlet. All viewed its presence as positive for the locale in terms of how the locale was recognised by others and increased employment. This need for the recognition and positive evaluations of others echoed that of Abertillery.

4.3.5 The Body, The Hands and The Mind

There were differences in how ‘the body’ and ‘the hands’ emerged in the accounts of the two communities. Across the Ynysawdre data sets the theme ‘the body’ was not strong. One participant who briefly focused on ‘the body’ was Philip, when he spoke of the physical fitness required to work on land-drilling rigs, for twelve-hour shifts, seven days a week. However, even for Philip ‘the body’ was a secondary theme, with ‘work of the hands’ the enduring theme. ‘The hands’ was also a primary theme in the accounts of both Lewis and Thomas when they spoke of manufacturing and repair work. It also emerged in the accounts of some of the women, for example May (older group) and Susan (middle generation). This illustrated a contrast between the two locales. While work of the hands was understood in Abertillery as relatively low status feminine work compared to work of the body, in Ynysawdre it had been afforded more equal status due to the availability of ‘appropriate’ manufacturing work for both women and men. Many men working in manufacturing had traditionally undertaken the ‘heavy’ work, such as furniture construction, while women worked in clothing factories carrying out lighter sewing duties, as women did in Abertillery.

The emphasis of engineering work and mechanics promoted work of the hands in this locale to high-level status. As in Abertillery, particularly high status work was associated with masculinity. However, unlike Abertillery the skills related to work of the hands elevated it above work of the body, such as bus driving. In Ynysawdre, obtaining skills of the hands provided transferable expertise that maintained employability in a locale with manufacturing opportunities.

The meanings carried in the theme ‘Work of the mind’ were similar in the two locales. For older and middle group participants, this theme was less salient, while for the younger group it was extremely salient. In the accounts of the young people, most of whom were engaged in non-compulsory education, ‘work of the mind’ was afforded much higher status than work of the hands. These young people had been encouraged to engage in ‘mind work’ due to the need to increase their employment opportunities and earning capacity. An important difference between the accounts of young people in Ynysawdre and those in Abertillery

involved the intention to leave the locale. For younger men and women education afforded imagined futures in the outside world. However, the overriding preference for young Ynysawdre participants was not to escape the locale, but to attend a university within travelling distance so that they could remain in their home locale. The Ynysawdre locale was understood as a provider of both opportunities for career progression and the transport links to prosperous locales. Imagined future careers could be followed without the need for the physical transition to an alternative locale.

4.3.6 Unity and Fragmentation

The accounts of Ynysawdre participants initially suggested a relatively united focus on many positive elements of the locale. The number of young people wanting to remain living in the locale also initially provided a sense of unity and continuity. However, the accounts indicated that the locale was seen as convenient for the needs of individuals rather than a place where a narrowly defined and united community resided.

4.3.7 Schooling

Schooling was a key theme across the data sets due to the direction provided to the photo-elicitation interviewees. Very similar sub-themes emerged from the accounts of both the Ynysawdre and Abertillery participants. Formal schooling was not salient for the older Ynysawdre participants who all expected to follow socially circumscribed adult roles in either domestic or manual fields. The accounts of the middle group interviewees paralleled those of the Abertillery middle generation; schooling was not considered relevant to the adult world of work in the Ynysawdre locale, nor was it recognised as ‘in-touch’ with the needs of local people. For example:

“We are moving on through school but we are not doing the basics. Now that is how I see it. You have got to have the basics and I felt annoyed that

when I was in school like in the late 60's and 70's they couldn't acknowledge this."

(Philip)

In Ynysawdre, as in Abertillery, the older and middle generations considered themselves treated as second class by the school system if they excelled at practical subjects, such as metalwork or woodwork, rather than academic subjects. These participants felt this even though employment trends within the locale favoured those with practical skills. Teachers went about their work in a routine manner, and did not adapt their methods to aid children with different, more practical abilities. In contrast, the younger generations of both locales had taken up a discourse that presented education as the way forward. Schooling has not only become a crucial foundation for a high status career, but also the responsibility of the recipient of learning, rather than the provider. For this community, like Abertillery, a shift had occurred. The focus on the responsibility of teachers to teach was gradually being replaced by the responsibility of students to manage their own learning in order to succeed.

4.3.8 'Real world' teaching and learning

Similarities with Abertillery emerged through the theme of 'real world' teaching and learning. For the older and middle group men work communities and their associated apprenticeships were where real learning began. Apprenticeships relating to mechanical skills were particularly salient for men. The accounts of the two older women suggest that the mastering of domestic duties dominated their imagined futures. The accounts of the women of the middle generation, like those in Abertillery, suggest that learning from 'real' people with life experience is crucial. The younger interviewees saw the A level education they were receiving as 'real world teaching and learning', as this was preparing them for adult careers.

4.3.9 College

College emerged as a salient theme for Ynysawdre community members, however, a generational difference was the lack of salience for older residents. These had gained their knowledge and skills through the workplace only. Both the middle and younger generations emphasised how a college education can contribute to employability and career progression. A difference between the locales was the extremely positive view of Bridgend College presented by younger men and women, compared to the negative descriptions of Ebbw Vale College in the accounts of both middle and younger Abertillery interviewees.

4.3.10 Sources of support

Parents and teachers emerged in Ynysawdre as major sources of support, as they did in Abertillery. There were strong generational and sex-group differences, although the pattern differed from that identified in the Abertillery cohort. Whereas fathers had been the most salient source of support and encouragement for older men in Abertillery, they were salient to only one of the older Ynysawdre group, a woman whose father had encouraged her to find work she enjoyed and had provided her with financial assistance at relevant times. Also differing from the Abertillery accounts was the salience of mothers for the middle generation. Men cited their fathers rather than their mothers as the main source of support and encouragement. This suggests a continuing positive role for men in the Ynysawdre locale, compared to the loss of power and influence experienced by men in Abertillery.

For the younger age group, parents and family members were the most cited source of support and encouragement, including fathers, mothers, stepfathers, grandparents and brothers. Teachers were also important sources of support. Two younger women and one man cited specific teachers as 'inspiring' and 'helpful'.

4.3.11 Work-related education and/or training

There were some strong generational differences in the salience of work-related education and/or training. These emerged from the accounts of the middle generation of men and the younger generation of men and women. The middle generation of Ynysawdre men had not rejected work of the hands, as the middle generation of Abertillery men had done. Thus in this locale there is a much stronger continuity through the generations regarding both hands-on, 'on the job' learning and apprenticeship-type learning, with a college element. Although the relevance of work-related education and training to younger men had shifted towards the need to gain higher-level formal qualifications, the local tradition of 'work of the hands' had been maintained. Both younger men intended to enter higher education, but for careers with a strong 'hands-on' element. Both intended to become electronics engineers.

'Learning on the job' also had different meaning for the younger Ynysawdre women compared to those in Abertillery. Younger Abertillery women either attended school or took up employment, whereas the Ynysawdre young women were combining both. Five of the nine reported having part-time jobs in stores at the retail outlet, during which they received 'on the job' training. One other younger woman works part-time for a local accountant as preparation for her own higher education accountancy studies.

4.3.12 Regrets

The majority of photo-elicitation participants were of the younger generation and did not express any regrets regarding choices they have made. Additionally, none of the older or middle generation men in either interview cohort expressed regret regarding their own education and career choices; for these sub-groups their schooling and work pathways were set. However, Thomas had been disappointed about the cessation of his apprenticeship when his employer ceased operating, while Philip mourned the closure of the local coalmines.

The only two participants who did express regret regarding their education and career choices were women in the older and middle groups. Angela, who had taken '*my little office job*' until marriage and motherhood, regretted not training to become a cookery teacher:

"But it was not the way. I got married and had three children, and I've been very happy."

Angela's daughter Julie, a teacher, expressed regret at not forging a career in politics, a field her father and grandfather had both been active in:

"I would have loved to have been involved in the law, in politics, in American politics in the US. I would have loved to have been an intern for the Democrats, but it was not to be."

4.3.13 The Future

The overall pattern of response regarding the future was similar to that provided by the Abertillery participants. In Ynysawdre none of the older or middle generations planned to participate in any career-enhancing episodes of education or training. Explanations included:

"No, I've done my limit."

(Julie)

"Too old now, maybe something creative like greetings card making."

(May)

"Probably not. I'll get by, I'm always doing something."

(Thomas)

While the younger men were interested in combining work of the mind with work of the hands, the women all prioritised work of the mind, with imagined futures including teaching, criminal psychology, social work, accountancy and sociology.

4.4 Conclusion

The accounts of men and women in Abertillery show how the material culture, practices and discourses circulating within the locale provided an available stock of ideas, which constructed the parameters for sense making. The design of the study involved asking three generations of community members to respond to photographs that re-presented elements of the material culture of their locales. The analysis demonstrated that the participants in both Abertillery and Ynysawdre drew on the available social representations of their locale in different ways. What was salient to them depended on the functional necessities of their lives, their social roles, and how far removed they were from the experiences of heavy industry. It is possible to imagine people on a temporal scale, with points representing active mining, rupture and increasing distance from the practices of mining. The analysis has shown that as members move further away from the experiences of mining as an active practice they draw on different aspects of social representations anchored in the practices of mining. Thus it is possible to map how meanings change for different generations across time.

For the older generation themes rooted firmly in the past, prior to colliery closure, were most meaningful. In Abertillery, themes relating to industrial land use, mining, above and below ground and the working body emerged through analysis of the interviews with men of the older generation. This suggested that they still drew on the practice of mining to make sense. They endowed these themes with positive meaning. The themes expressed the importance of camaraderie, unity and community. They expressed loss through reference to the landscape. They spoke about what the local land had been used for, implicitly invoking the work that had gone on below ground. Other groups in contrast focused on the surface and spoke about the beauty of the landscape. Education was seen as largely irrelevant to the majority of men who had worked in the mines. Although the themes of mining, above and below ground and the landscape emerged in the analysis of the older women's interviews they used them in different ways to make sense. Women acknowledged the proud mining heritage of Abertillery, but focused strongly on the present beauty of the landscape suggesting that the beauty compensated for loss. The women spoke about the relationships they had forged between

themselves above ground. Many of these women had grown up as miner's daughters had become 'miners' wives' and 'miners' mothers'. Although distanced from personal physical experience of the mines, these women spoke of the loss of an industry that impacted upon the lives of those above ground in terms of the decline of the locale and fragmentation of a community.

Many of the themes that were important to the older generation were also salient for the middle generation of men. However the meanings these themes carried for the middle group were very different to those they held for the older generation. While themes relating to the mining practices of Abertillery had carried very positive meanings for older men and women, they contained negative connotations for this second generation. These men described mining as undesirable employment. This demonstrated the way that social representations belonging to the locale had been recognised by this generation of men, but had been used by them to position themselves differently. These men focused on fragmentation, loss and the decline of the community. They gave a sense of the community losing its social identity and cohesion. These men recognised that education was becoming important, but their talk about education revealed tensions. They described how the education system had failed to help them to re-orient themselves in the post-industrial era. Many felt rejected and let down by 'the system'.

In the accounts of Abertillery women of the middle generation themes relating to identity, tradition and the beauty of the landscape emerged. Although the women acknowledged the economic decline of Abertillery, they recognised both the once proud traditions and practices of the past, and the natural beauty of the local landscape. Education featured more positively in the accounts of these women than it did for either the older women or the middle generation men. They also continued to value work of the hands demonstrated by the many references to domestic duties in their interviews.

The change in the salience of themes over time was illustrated by the accounts of the younger generation. It appears to have taken just two generations for the meanings attached to industrial land use, mining practices, above and below, and

unity, to become invisible. The younger generation of men did not mention any of the major themes that were salient for the older and middle generations of men. They spoke about opportunities for education and learning, along with future careers outside the locale. Their accounts focused more on the efforts and endeavours of the individual, rather than the community, and there was a distinct absence of talk about camaraderie and community cohesion.

The themes emerging from the young women's accounts were similar to those of the young men, although there was one clear difference. Young women spoke about the history of the locale and recognised the values associated with it even if they conveyed a sense of leaving this behind. Like the younger men, these women saw education as the route forward and accepted the responsibility for their own learning.

The three generations of Abertillery residents have appropriated the social representations of the locale differently. Analysis has demonstrated how different generations drew on different aspects of the available meanings that circulated within the locale to make sense and project themselves into imaginary futures. Analysis demonstrated how groups appropriated aspects of the dominant social representations of the locale as symbolic resources that they used to make sense. In this way they revitalised some elements of the social representations of the locale and not others, according to the functional necessities of their lives. This demonstrates how ideas change across time. Sociogenesis can be seen as the active appropriation of available resources as individuals undertake psychic work in the process of making sense. The study took place in communities that had experienced rupture, due to colliery closure. This traumatic aspect of the history of the mining communities heightened the need for generations to make sense, as the former social order disappeared. The history of the community has allowed the process of change to become more visible and was captured strongly by the differences identified across the three generations of participants interviewed.

In order to understand how individuals make personal use of social representations it is necessary to move to a different plane of analysis. The following chapter will investigate how individuals used social representations as symbolic resources to

make sense, construct a narrative account and to imagine a future trajectory. It will present an analysis of two case studies, Richard an older generation ex-miner from Abertillery, and Philip, a middle generation ex-NCB worker from Ynysawdre. It demonstrates the ways these two individuals used specific symbolic resources available in their locales to make sense following community rupture. In this way the chapter focuses on how individuals coped with a historical trauma.

Chapter 5

Social Representations as Symbolic Resources:

Philip and Richard

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter recognised dominant social representations circulating in Abertillery and Ynysawdre. It also identified differences across the locales, with regard to the circulation of social representations, the ways in which Abertillery and Ynysawdre community members appropriate these. Social representations are rooted in historical practices of communities. Chapter 4 demonstrated that groups of men and women draw upon different aspects of social representations in order to make sense of their lives, and that this appropriation depends on the point in time at which people enter the community and their personal experiences within the locale. The rupture of de-industrialisation caused dramatic shifts in the established social order in each of the locales, and in order to cope with the aftermath of the change men and women of different generations have used the social representations available to their communities in very different ways. Chapter 1 acknowledged that different forms of knowledge can co-exist within the same group or individual, and that people will draw upon a specific form according to their needs within particular social context (Jovchelovitch, 2007). During interviews in which individuals are required to present a coherent narrative contradictions due to cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961.1976a, in Jovechelovitch, 2007) would be expected.

Social representations belong to the community. They may be available to individual community members but in order to become psychically active they are appropriated by individuals to serve a specific function. Social representations are endowed with personal meaning as they are taken up and used. Therefore a distinction can be made between social representations – belonging to a community – and individual use of aspects of these, referred to as symbolic

resources (Zittoun et al, 2003). In order to create personal narratives individuals actively appropriate and use aspects of available social representations to achieve a personal need. This chapter now presents the individual plane of analysis. It presents an in-depth analysis of the ways in which two individuals make personal use of the social representations circulating in their locales in order to cope following dramatic social ruptures.

The chapter identifies the social representations that thread through and colour the narratives of each man. It demonstrates how the men used available social representations as symbolic resources. Previously it was shown that social representations of 'education', 'mining' and 'the body' were circulating in the two locales. These were available to both men, yet they take them up differently and use them for distinct purposes. Richard, an older generation man from Abertillery appropriated a set of social representations based around the strenuous physical practices of mining and used this to make sense of the physical and psychological changes he had experienced. Philip, from the middle generation in Ynysawdre appropriated social representations of education and skilled manual work and set them up in opposition to each other in order to justify his disengagement with schooling. This analysis considers the psychic work undertaken by each man in order to deal with transitions in their lives.

Richard and Philip

Philip, a forty-six-year-old from Ynysawdre, has also lived in his locale all his life, although he now works outside its boundaries. Philip's school experiences were extremely negative and he disengaged with the education system. He worked for the National Coal Board for approximately eight years before being made redundant. He had expected to remain in this employment until retirement although was able to forge an alternative work and employment trajectory. Philip regrets his poor experiences of education and this, along with his ability to earn a living are major strands in his narrative.

Richard is an ex-miner, aged 62, who has lived and worked in Abertillery all his life. At an early age he became determined to become a miner and thought little about any alternative trajectories that might be available, including education. He was forced to retire from mining during his thirties due to continuing ill health, a subject he returns to again and again during his narrative. Although he had not been a miner for many years before the closures of the collieries, Richard regrets the loss of the mining practices he still strongly relates to, and he strives to preserve the industrial heritage of the locale.

5.2 **‘The Mechanic’: Philip’s story**

Philip’s interview provides a chronologically ordered account of his experiences of education and work, from his entry into the primary school system to the present day. Philip was keen to talk about his experiences of school, and sharing his memories of schooling appeared to evoke strong emotions. These memories of his schooldays, and the feelings related to them frequently reoccur throughout the interview.

5.2.1 **Entering the school system**

Philip introduces his experiences of schooling with an account of his enforced entry into a community he did not like. In chapter 4 a powerful social representation of the school as ‘other’ was identified, and at the outset Philip appears to appropriate this in order to introduce his discomfort on entering primary school:

“Oh, infants school, it was traumatic, you know? Going from your mother to school, and I couldn’t seem to take to it.”

His interview conveys a sense that Philip could neither make sense of, nor fit into a school system that resided within the community, but which remained alien to most local people. Throughout his interview Philip speaks of ‘the school’, ‘education’ and ‘the system’, appearing to draw heavily on a social representation suggested in chapter 4 of the school as a faceless, de-individualised, dominant power that imposed its demands regardless of individual abilities. When speaking of his early experiences, Philip seems to be invoking the image of a colossal ‘foreign’ power that assumed control of children in the Ynysawdre locale. He seems to use this to communicate a childhood sense of confusion and vulnerability.

This feeling of vulnerability remains at the forefront of his interview as he speaks of a system that privileged the academically inclined, who were more able to

master the language and practices encountered in the school. Philip describes his limited ability to construct productions that were valued in this early academic arena:

“But I had terrible trouble with reading and writing. My work was dreadful, looked dreadful.”

Philip appears to be drawing upon a social representation of education as consisting of academic progress and achievement, a system in which work of the hands holds very little relevance or value. Philip seems to be using this to present himself as both an underachiever and outsider in an unforgiving institution in which children were labelled at an extremely early age. Those less able to achieve were dismissed and ignored. He describes his early positioning as a member of the remedial ‘clay class’:

“I was put straight in the clay class. I don’t know why. But I never really got away from that.”

Philip appears to continue to draw upon a social representation of the education system as the legitimate source of valued and relevant judgments of children based on their academic ability only. He seems also to introduce the school as a place in which parents did not involve themselves, and in which explicit challenges of the value judgements made about children by teachers were discouraged. It is here that Philip’s account first suggests a discontinuity. His interview suggests he is continuing to draw upon a social representation of education as possessing power that stems from outside the locale, and it goes on to suggest that Philip challenges the right of such a detached institution to hand down such negative and damaging evaluations of local children:

“They took us in and just labelled us. They didn’t even know us.”

However, Philip conveys his assignment to the ‘clay class’ as a ‘concretized’ negative judgement provided by a highly legitimate and relevant source, a judgement that contradicts the values of the locale relating to the value of the practical skills possessed by his father. He also gives primacy to this evaluation

by the school over his mother's conflicting recognition of him as a 'quite bright' boy:

'My mother, she said I was quite bright. But my parents were very traditional sort of people, valley people and sort of... Welsh people.'

His interview suggests that he is anchoring his 'clay class' membership and his teacher's responses to his poorly presented work within a system of meaning regulated by the social setting of the school. He appears to be acknowledging the power the school possessed during the 1960s, a power he is able to question as an adult.

Philip's account further indicates his acknowledgement of the power of 'the system' through his talk of teachers. Although Philip appears to be appropriating a social representation identified in chapter 4 of teachers as representing authority figures within a highly valued system, and who were disconnected from the individual needs of children, he seems to be blaming the force of 'the system', rather than the teachers themselves – "*I don't blame the teachers, they couldn't... ..*". However, Philip does not elaborate this point, appearing instead to be using it to convey the helplessness of young children of varying abilities entering a strange system in which even adults must conform.

5.2.2 From primary to secondary school

As Philip speaks about his transition from primary to secondary schooling, his continuing anger at, and resentment of a school system that he feels has betrayed him are evident. To speak of the way he feels he was categorised and segregated by the school Philip seems to draw upon a social representation existing within the locale, acknowledged in chapter 4, of academic subjects as the highly valued elements of a hierarchical school system. His interview suggests that practical subjects were seen as a poor substitute for academic study, and Philip's account communicates a sense of humiliation that, as an 'underachiever' he was excluded

from many school communities, positioned within categories of constraint and restricted to life on the periphery of the world of education:

“Those of us who couldn’t do all the English and science and history and that, they just wrote us off, right at the beginning. We never had a chance.”

At this point in his interview Philip shifts the focus onto his son’s current schooling. However, this is intended to present a comparison of contemporary educational practices to those of the 60s and 70s. Chapter 4 recognised an enduring social representation of school learning as the crucial foundation for success in adult life, and Philip’s account suggests that he is drawing upon this to support his claim that his failure to become engaged with formal schooling was the fault of the system, a system that failed him from the first day he entered school, when they assigned him to the ‘clay class’:

“My son now is nine years old and they have adopted a policy in Penyvane school where the children that don’t know, the likes of myself, don’t reach a certain standard they hold them back. Now a lot of the parents, I got involved in an argument about a year ago in the house there. I have since split up with my partner which is another story, and there was a room full of people and there was a couple of parents in the house there with my partner, whose child had been held back, bitched their children had been held back and they were really annoyed with it and they couldn’t understand it. And the whole...they all agreed and I said ‘Now, you don’t understand this is a marvellous idea’, and they couldn’t understand what I was saying. I said ‘We are moving on through school but we are not doing the basics’. Now that is how I see it, you have got to have the basics, and I felt annoyed that when I was in school, like in the late 60’s and 70’s, they couldn’t acknowledge this.”

Although Philip is using this to make sense of his own trajectory through school, by re-visiting ‘education’ as a parent, he appears able to be repairing some of the damage he experienced during his time inside the school system by providing evidence that he had not been at fault. He appears to be re-appropriating a set of social representations of education that once positioned him as ‘written off’, but now seems to be investing these with hope and possibility, due to the education system acknowledging and rectifying its previous mistake. Philip seems to be drawing upon relatively recently established social representations to interact with

the education system as a parent. His current view of education is inextricably associated with social and economic changes in the locale. He uses a social representation, recognised in chapter 4, of the locale as undergoing regeneration through an increased focus on education, along with a social representation of schooling as something that is expected to serve all children; although the power of education is ultimately held by an external authority, local schools are now answerable to students and their parents; children are no longer simply the raw material that was once filtered through the system.

It is while Philip talks of school subjects and learning ‘the basics’ that a contradiction re-appears in his account. It is another example of cognitive polyphasia, one that appears to enable Philip to resist his positioning as an underachiever and protect the way in which he feels he has been identified. While he acknowledges that academic subjects possessed value within the school and provided education and work routes for more able students, he appears to draw upon a network of social representations shared by those outside the school to challenge the accepted hierarchy. Social representations of ‘real world’ practical skills as highly valued were identified in chapter 4, and these saturate Philip’s account. Philip talks at length about his ‘natural’ practical abilities, appearing to use the values of a different, local world to challenge those of the school by conveying the importance of learning ‘real’ skills that can be used outside of the school to produce relevant artefacts. Richard re-introduces his mother here to emphasise the value to which his metal and wood productions had been ascribed value:

“Later I went back to live at my mum’s house. She had died and left me the house. The house is the same now as it was when in the seventies; and there is all the things I made in school. The pokers, the things that I made on the lathe. All ornaments and different things. Shelves. It was like, I just....”

Philip’s interview suggests that although he continued to attend secondary school he all but opted out of the education system, preferring to invest in the learning of applied skills, such as woodwork and metalwork that he saw as useful beyond the

classroom. He speaks with enthusiasm about spending time at a farm with men who were doing 'real' work:

"It was so exciting because there was a couple of old boys there who used to strip tractors down and it was just an exciting place to be and there was all machinery there, the animals, that is where my interests lie."

It is at this point that Philip introduces his father's world; an alternative world in which he was made welcome and provided with the means to become a fully functioning member. He continues to describe a world relating to work of the hands; a world in which he achieved membership through physical engagement, and to which he attaches extremely high status. In doing this he seems to be drawing upon a social representation of work with tools and machinery as particularly valuable men's work, a social representation that was identified in chapter 4 as particularly strong within the Ynysawdre locale. By describing the status his father enjoyed within the community due to the transferability of his skills in mechanics Philip appears to justifying his own minimal investment in formal education:

"He used to do everything. He used to repair the colliery drams that went in the ground. Prior to that he used to work on the railway and he used to repair the coal trucks. Vehicles, like he did at home. Always busy, people wanting him to..... [.....] I felt that as a child I wanted to be, dare I say it, go to work with my father. My father used to repair, my father was pretty handy with everything and he used to repair cars for people at the back of the house and it was much more exciting to go and help him."

Philip continues to appropriate social representations of masculinity and work of the hands, and appears to use this to challenge not only the judgements of the school, but also the legitimacy of the education system itself in the Ynysawdre locale. In his account he appears to be anchoring 'the school' in terms of its relationship with the 'real' world of men's work to make sense of his disorientation in the school setting, suggesting that he could make sense of, and function effectively within an alternative world that was more authentic and meaningful to the people of the locale. Through his descriptions of his schooling as '*nonsense*', '*a charade*', '*a rigmarole*' and '*bull*' Philip seems to appropriate a social representation established in chapter 4 as circulating during the 1970s, of school as an 'out-of-touch' education system. This devaluing of formal education,

and consequently the judgements of the school staff seems to compensate for his disengagement as a schoolchild.

Though Philip's account indicates his dismissal of formal education as irrelevant, due to his segregation of education and 'real life', he goes on to criticise the local school system for its attempts to forge connections to the region, arguing that these efforts were driven by national targets and timetables rather than sensitivity to children's needs:

“I do feel annoyed that not enough emphasis was put on spelling. And we were moving on to things, you know, they were trying to teach us Welsh. We can't even read properly, you know, and we are on to Welsh! Things like vocabulary, basic things that you need.”

By stressing this failure of the education system, Philip appears to be appropriating a social representation of education as a necessary institution, but only for providing the fundamental skills of reading and writing, skills that can be applied to 'real life'

5.2.3 From school to work

Contrasting with Philip's story of his traumatic entry into the world of education is his account of his transition from education to the world of full-time work.

Chapter 4 identified strong social representations of work and employment that were circulating in the 1970s. Specifically, in communities connected to the coal industry boys leaving school with few qualifications were often expected to take up apprenticeships or follow older male relatives into work related to the land, such as farming or mining. Philip's account suggests that he initially draws upon social representations of traditional local occupations to talk of his childhood expectations regarding his adult future:

“Well it was either that [*repairing cars*] or farming, which a close friend of mine had a farm just down the road and if it wasn't, I very rarely got involved in sport, I didn't like it, it was much more exciting to go down and go with my mates dad and herd the cows into the cowshed and take them to the bottom fields, twice, well I wouldn't say twice a day because it was done early in the morning. Help with milking and the

daily running of the farm.”

However, in his presentation of a relatively smooth transition from school to work Philip appears to have fully appropriated those social representations of the coal industry as the expected trajectory. His interview suggests this period to be relatively problem-free, and Philip appears to draw upon a number of related social representations to convey this. Chapter 4 acknowledged a social representation of physical labour within the coalmines as appropriate work for those who did not, or could not engage with education, and also as a direct cause of young men’s disengagement with schooling. Philip appears to use these to describe his ease of entry into a traditional world of work in the locale. He appropriates a social representation of employment in the mines as a traditional and proud trajectory, and an expected and desirable trajectory for many young men of his socio-economic status:

“Well the tradition was when I leave, left school in ’77, I think it was ‘77, my dad obviously got me involved in the coal industry.”

While speaking of his entry into the world of mining, Philip introduces a social representation of the coal industry as both inclusive and exclusive. In chapter 4 a social representation of mining as a way of life for generations of men – grandfathers, fathers and sons – was recognised, and Philip’s account suggests that he is appropriating this in order to convey both the elite status that mining conferred upon workers, and his right to belong to this world. He appears to use his father as a symbolic resource to communicate that, unlike school, the world of manual work was not difficult for him to understand due to his level of pre-existing knowledge relating to mechanics. Philip appears to be continuing to draw upon a social representation of practical skills as valuable. However, here its purpose seems to be to affirm that his passage from an academic social setting to one of manual work was not only a smooth transition, but also a positive move. Philip’s interview suggests that he is using his membership of an exclusive community to protect his own self-identifications.

Throughout much of Philip’s narrative the opposition of mind/body is present, and his account of this transitional period suggests that he is working hard to present

himself as a capable young man who lived up to the expectations of coal industry employees. To do this he appears to continue to draw upon social representations that maintain positive associations between work and the physical body. Chapter 4 established the existence of social representations of heavy industry as a world that provided opportunity and financial reward for those who were prepared to push their bodies to the limit, often taking risks. Thus even though Philip's account emphasises 'the hands' rather than 'the body', by declaring that he had endured and survived the harsh demands of his first job Philip appears to be appropriating socially shared understandings relating to work and the masculine body to assert that he attained legitimate membership of this respected social group:

“The job was interesting but it nearly killed me, physically killed me, as soon as I turned 18 I had to work 7 days a week, 12 hour shifts.”

To make this claim Philip appears to be also drawing upon social representations of the *exclusiveness* of the coal industry, in contrast to his earlier appropriation of notions of the inclusiveness that allowed the ease with which he gained entry to the industry. It appears that in order to assert the consolidation of his work role, Philip is appropriating those social representations identified in chapter 4 that allow the objectification of the coal industry as a closed world. His recognition of the physical and practical criteria for acceptance into this world suggests that Philip is bringing into focus the mind/body opposition and using the work of the body as a symbolic resource to reaffirm an unproblematic transition to exclusive employment, and adulthood, based on his non-academic capabilities. This allows Philip once again to contradict the system of meaning underlying the valuing of academic and practical achievement by the education system, which in turn serves to compensate to some extent for his experiences of exclusion at school. He seems to be continuing to resist negative identifications made by the education system by presenting this exclusive world of work as being in sharp contrast to the school; as one in which practical competencies were valued particularly highly, and in which he was accepted as a confident and achieving full participant. In describing the nature of his NCB work, Philip also appears to be appropriating a social representation, identified in chapter 4, of the reliance of heavy industry on

the local physical landscape. This allows Philip to continue to emphasise the importance of the 'physical' in Ynysawdre, rather than the 'academic'.

However, even while citing his progress within a locally valued context, Philip communicates a contradiction by re-appropriating those same social representations made available by the education system of the primacy of intellectual activity over physical exertion that he was attempting to discredit. Philip seems able to draw upon competing social representations at different points of the interview in order to present himself in a positive way. This appears to be a clear example of the simultaneous possession of different forms of knowledge, with different rationalities (Jovchelovitch, 2007), and of how an individual may vary in his appropriation of these as symbolic resources as his needs change. Philip appears here to appropriate a social representation of academic ability in order to use the level of mental stimulation his work activity provided him as further evidence of the legitimacy and status of this social role. In this way, even though he had earlier dismissed the usefulness of academic achievement, he seems to be attempting to align himself with the higher status 'work of the mind':

"I got on what they call a land-drilling rig which was labouring, but that was very interesting. Interesting in the fact that we were drilling, taking samples, soil samples, working all around South Wales. The job was interesting."

It is while Philip speaks of his transition from school to work that he appears to acknowledge notions of 'the body'. In chapter 4 a social representation of mineworkers as tough and resilience labourers was identified, and Philip seems to draw upon this to describe his transition from school to work:

"Nineteen-seventy-eight I joined the NCB, and I got on what they call a land drilling rig, which was labouring, but that was very interesting. Interesting in the fact that we were drilling, taking samples, soil samples, working all around South Wales. The job was interesting but it nearly killed me, physically killed me. As soon as I turned 18 I had to work 7 days a week, 12 hour shifts. I had to work seven days a week."

However, Philip's interview suggests that he does not continue his appropriation of this social representation. Instead he seems to be taking up related aspects as

he focuses more upon embodied practice and embodied knowledge through work of the hands. His identity appears to be rooted in what he sees as higher status practices. Philip makes clear that the physical labour required of him was extremely tough, and that he had the bodily strength to survive this, thus he aligns himself with the non-academic, working class men who carried the highest status in his locale. However, following this he quickly returns to 'work of the hands', specifically his own ability to maintain and repair equipment. Philip's embodied identity is constructed through the ability of his hands, and through the knowledge he holds regarding how to use his hands successfully.

5.2.4 Job transfer within the NCB

Philip's shift from outdoor drilling rig team member to internal maintenance technician within the NCB Training Centre was the only transition that had been under Philip's control. After seven years he had found the long hours on the drilling rig unacceptable and had sought an alternative position within the industry. Recognised in chapter 4 were social representations of the value of practical skills to 'real' working life, and these appear to underlie Philip's presentation of an uncomplicated transition. He speaks of his new work role in extremely positive terms, and emphasises the extent of the investment he had made; suggesting complete acceptance of the social identity offered by his job:

"Then I got involved in the fitting side, a colliery fitter I was. And that was, I fell in, marvellous job. Underground machinery, machinery that was underground, hydraulic, to you, hydraulic jacks that held the roof. That was the thing that I used to overhaul. We used to call them walking chocks and I used to repair those and I felt that I found myself then, that, you know 'This is my life story'."

Philip's narrative at this point in his interview appears to be relatively clear regarding self-identifications. He describes 'finding' himself in terms of embodied practices, for example repairing walking chocks, suggesting that he has aligned his sense of himself with heavy machinery. Philip appears to be re-introducing those strong social representations of the importance of machines that were suggested in chapter 4; in this case the fact that the hydraulic jacks

performed the crucial task of holding up the roof of the mines for huge numbers of miners. He seems to be appropriating these social representations as symbolic resources in order to communicate the value of the role with which he identified so strongly, and he supports this by appearing to draw once again upon social representations of work of the hands as valued by the Ynysawdre locale. When talking about his transitional period Philip makes no mention of other people, including his father, suggesting that he sees this transfer opportunity, and his subsequent success, as due to his own expertise and knowledge. In contrast to his description of his transition from work to school, while appearing to be re-appropriating social representations of the importance of hands-on participation to explain his transfer, he does not draw this time upon social representations of social support. He presents his transfer as a concretized judgement by the coal industry of his mechanical expertise and knowledge to convey his sense of usefulness and worth. In doing this Philip appears to be re-asserting that it was the learning and capable execution of practical skills – those unrecognised or undervalued by school staff during his childhood - that facilitated his relatively elevated work position.

Philip's narrative also suggests that the geographical location of his new NCB position is of crucial importance to his self-identifications. Identified in chapter 4 were social representations of the essential role of the Ynysawdre locale in the coal industry, and Philip seems to draw heavily upon these to construct this phase of his life. The anchoring of the coal industry in terms of the 'real' world of work, and its objectification as a closed world that perpetuated local masculine power has already been discussed in the previous chapter, and here Philip appears to be appropriating the local training centre as a symbol of that power. Philip's transfer from physical periphery (the mobile land drilling rig) to this core of the local coal industry made available for him a new set of cultural resources with which he could construct a social identity that could compensate for his prior marginalisation at school:

"It was just up by here. Well actually it wasn't a mine it was a workshop that, they have just built new houses by here in Tondy now. Well actually it was one of the main centres of the mining industry. There was, I would say there was about three hundred office workers there, it was a huge

complex. There was transport running from there, there was a few thousand people running the coal industry from Tondur. Tondur was a main, was a main, sort of, area, central area that would supply the collieries with machinery, lorries, clerical staff, were all linked to Tondur, one of the main areas and I was involved in this area here, as I say, I was living on the doorstep.”

By providing such a clear picture of both the centre’s proximity to his home and its importance to the entire region, Philip is able to communicate a sense of value that extended far beyond the boundaries of the locale. In doing this he re-emphasises those social representations acknowledged in chapter 4 of the South Wales coal industry as valued by much of the coal-buying world, an emphasis that resonates with the notion of individual locales as meeting places for global social interaction. By talking in this way Philip seems to draw upon a social representation of a coal industry centre that held great power, not only in the locale, but also in the wider geographical region, and he appears to be using this to assert the extent of his own personal progression through manual work, rather than education. To present his position within the world of work Philip appears to collapse the near and far, using both the boundedness of his home locale as a place of importance due to the coal industry and, at the same time, he seems to dissolve those boundaries to stress the global value of the training centre.

Philip’s account of his employment presents an impersonal world. While he earlier drew upon a social representation of miners as valued members of the community to resist ‘the school’, here he appears to ignore his fellow participants in the world of mining. There are no anecdotes from his years as an NCB employee, and no friends, colleagues or NCB authority figures are referenced. His interview at this point suggests that Philip is appropriating social representations of conflicting powerful, but faceless and impersonal institutions (education/coal industry) to make sense of both the rejections he has experienced and the opportunities he has been offered. He seems to be offering these to convey his progression from the powerlessness of ‘the schoolchild’ to the relative might of ‘the mineworker’.

However, Philip’s talk again suggests a contradiction in that he offers the training centre as a source of both local power and a symbol of his own success, while

simultaneously playing down the part that formal training has played in his own work trajectory. Again, this is an example of cognitive polyphasia; Philip appears to appropriate a social representation of the training centre as important, and also one of embodied experience as ‘real learning’. Although Philip seems to be consistently appropriating that social representation, identified in chapter 4, of work of the hands as acceptable men’s work, and although he presents mine working as a strong counter to education, he refers only briefly and rather disparagingly of his own level of hands-on training. This appears to suggest that his account continues to draw upon a persistent social representation of the primacy of academic education:

“All the collieries, yes, when you were a young lad you had to go there and you would have some sort of safety training and this that and the other, went all through that and it was basic stuff, nothing complicated, it wasn’t rocket science by any means.”

5.2.5 Redundancy

When Philip introduces the subject of his redundancy from the coal industry, a sense of bitterness and betrayal returns to his interview, a bitterness that had appeared earlier in the interview when it was directed at a school system that betrayed Philip’s childhood self. Philip explained that he expected to continue working for the NCB and his account suggests the extent to which he was shaken by his dismissal:

“Why did I leave? Why did Thatcher close the mine down? We were made redundant. She closed just about virtually every colliery. Very rarely did people leave the NCB, because once you were in it, it was a job for life, and to be quite honest with you when I went there I thought ‘Well yes, great’, you know, that is, ‘All I have got to do is go there in the morning and build my life around it, it’s a job for life’.”

Here Philip’s talk conveys the sense of disorientation that the loss of his job had caused him to experience, and he draws upon a range of social representations to communicate this. Identified in chapter 4 was a social representation of mineworkers as a body of men who benefited from solidarity and strength, and

Philip's assertion that NCB employment meant 'a job for life' suggests that Philip is appropriating this to communicate the shock that colliery employees experienced at the closure of the mines. He also appears to draw upon a social representation of the British government as a highly legitimate and powerful institution, but one disconnected from the experiences and needs of local people. This seems to be in order to make sense of the comprehensive dismissal of high numbers of NCB employees and the disregard that the dominant institution showed for his skills with machinery. This use appears to echo Philip's earlier appropriation of social representations of education, when he described a whole group of less-academically inclined children as '*written off*'. Here Philip appears to re-appropriate a system of meaning that threatens his positive self-identifications, one that allows him to be once again identified as a member of a marginalized and vulnerable group. He seems to be re-appropriating a social representation of 'Government' as a symbolic resource to communicate his feelings of re-experiencing his renewed sense of being categorised as useless, unnecessary and unwanted by a powerful and unrelenting force. His description of the government's treatment of the miners implies his sense of betrayal and alienation, along with the stigmatization that resulted from the loss of the conflict:

"Basically we were sold off we were. In one go we were wiped out."

Philip's talk of the physical structures that replaced the Tondu Training Centre suggests his need to hold on to some element of the positive sense of identity he had been offered by his employment. Earlier in his interview he communicated a strong social representation of the training centre as a symbol of the value and status of the Ynysawdre community, and he appears to re-appropriate this in order to challenge the legitimacy and consequence of a prominent, brightly coloured and well-signposted business park now located at the site. Even though it has existed for two decades and Philip passes it every day on his journeys to and from work, in his interview Philip seems to refuse to acknowledge its presence in the locale:

"There's an enterprise park there now. I don't know what it is. I refer to it as the training centre."

Philip appears to be appropriating the social representation of the training centre as a symbolic resource to make sense of the business park as a 'strange object', and by constructing a definite boundary around it, as he had done with the school, he is separating it from what he sees as the 'real' world.

5.2.6 From NCB fitter to auto mechanic

Philip's account of his move from colliery fitter to car mechanic re-introduces a strong social representation of practical, skilled work as highly valued in the Ynysawdre locale. He seems to be re-appropriating this in order to re-assert the value of the mechanical skills he has learned through active participation. In chapter 4 a specific social representation of mechanically skilled men as particularly adaptable and employable was identified, and here Philip appears to be drawing upon this to emphasise the related nature of his different work roles, both in terms of time (he repaired cars in his spare time while working for NCB) and in terms of function (both roles were involved with tool use, repair and maintenance). His appropriation of a social representation of mechanical skills as transferable appears to allow Philip to ameliorate the negative effects of his enforced redundancy by declaring a relatively smooth transfer from one job to another:

"Obviously I had some basic skills about repairing cars and I used to, in my spare time when I was working for the NCB I used to repair old cars and do them up and sell them and I moved to a place like a garage on a farm and well I was there for 20 years. General light vehicles."

Philip's appropriation of the social representation of skilled men as useful and having personal earning potential is continued in his talk of how his high level of ability affected his relationship with the garage owner:

"On the side, I used to do other peoples' vehicles. Friends. He didn't like it if I was taking work off him, honestly I had to play it very carefully, I couldn't take sort of Joe public's cars it was family only, family and friends only. But nevertheless it was generating money. It was generating money for myself and for my family."

‘The car’ appears to constitute a symbolic resource that Philip uses throughout his narrative, and at times it seems to have become a metaphor for his work trajectory. Philip presents himself as someone who is not paralysed by non-functionality, but as someone who, from childhood has had an ability to mend broken things, re-energise them and re-create momentum. When describing his move from the NCB to the garage he seems to be using ‘the car’ to make sense of his change of trajectory. Just as he can repair cars, so he was able to deploy his practical abilities to repair his fractured career and take a level of control of the momentum of his working life.

It is at this point in his interview that Philip begins to communicate a particularly strong sense of place through his talk of land use. Threading throughout Philip’s interview is a strong sense of continuity, due both to his repeated appropriation of social representations related to the value of manual skills, and also those relating to connections between farmland and local masculine work practices. His account of his employment as a car mechanic re-visits the ‘old boys’ repairing vehicles on a farm, a setting Philip had earlier described in extremely positive terms.

5.2.7 Becoming self-employed

A social representation of mechanical skills as valuable re-appears in Philip’s interview when he talks of his transition to self-employed status. However, here he seems to extend his earlier appropriation of such men as adaptable and employable. He explains how his practical competencies enabled him not only to become re-employed, but also to establish control of his working life and gain certain advantages. Here he seems to be using this social representation in a specific way in order to communicate a sense of personal and professional progression:

“I was working for someone and I also then progressed and the farmer let me have a piece of my own and so I used to repair his tractors and his familys’ cars, so I had it rent free. I used to have a barn to myself, had my own customers. As long as I didn’t take any of his though, but that’s hard not to do if they come to you. Yes, it was brilliant.”

Through his talk of progression Philip appears to be asserting the legitimacy of his membership within the world of the self-employed, a membership that necessitates a high level of practical skill in order to maintain a customer base and an acceptable level of profit. Further, against the backdrop of a locale that valued practical skills Philip appears to be offering the continued patronage of a familiar clientele as a concretised judgement of his work. He is re-introducing parents, friends and acquaintances as legitimate judges of his 'real world' practical abilities, which contrasts with the way he minimized his parents' opinions of his childhood competencies in the face of opposing opinion by the school, a highly legitimate institution. This implies the almost indelible barrier that Philip has drawn between education and the rest of the locale. Philip's interview suggests that he is presenting his relationship with the land through his knowledge and understanding of its connection with heavy industry and men's use of machinery.

5.2.8 Eviction – loss of self-employment

As Philip begins to speak of the loss of his car repair business, he appears to be re-emphasising his personal links to the local landscape. Chapter 4 recognized the circulation of a social representation of the local land as a resource for industry, and here Philip re-appropriates this to make sense of his enforced eviction. In his account Philip appears to draw upon his personal knowledge of the historical links between industry and landscape, and the farm in particular, to impart a sense of continued moral ownership of the land he was required to vacate:

“That came to the end last September, only last September. The old gent that owns the farm he is in ill health, he has got Parkinson's. He is coming up 80 years of age and his family saw pound signs and so thought that they would sell it for a quarter of a million and it has backfired on them big time. They can't sell the land because of environmental ruling because the land is polluted. They have got barn conversion plans on the old barns but it has backfired on them. It's still for sale. The old boy that owned the place Mr Lacey, his dad ran lorries from there in the 20's. There was no, when you had oil you just tipped it into the ground, and you know, that was common practice even recently.”

Philip appears to be using this social representation of industrial/land links to enable him to convey that he has a true moral ownership of the farmland in question; that while the legal heirs are distanced and disconnected from this land, he himself has developed a thorough knowledge and understanding of the soil on which he had constructed both a business and a related positive social identity.

5.2.9 From car repairer to car destroyer: the de-pollution technician

Philip continues his talk of oil dumping, now introducing his new job and appearing to re-appropriate a social representation of the 'knowledgeable and skilled worker' to assert his right to judge such practices:

“And they do make a big fuss of it [*oil dumping*]. I must admit they are going over the top now. I work in a de-pollution plant.”

To make sense of this latest transition from a repairer of cars to a destroyer of cars - a role that stands in opposition to the practices he has invested in all his life - Philip appears to bring together a range of social representations. He seems to be re-acknowledging a key social representation that has threaded through his interview – his ability to make functional what had become non-functional. Philip appears able to deal with this contradiction resulting from his transition to a destroyer of the functional through an appropriation of social representations of government institutions. By explaining that he destroys *illegal* cars he seems to be again drawing upon a social representation relating to the power and control of government institutions. This also seems to contradict an earlier strong suggestion of the government as a destroyer of communities, through an appropriation of a social representation of the government as the caretaker of the environment. This is a strong example of how people draw upon different, often oppositional forms of knowledge, when their needs demand it (e.g. Jovchelovitch, 2007). Philip appears to be doing this here to make sense through the understanding that by working for a government institution he is using his skills to contribute to the repair and maintenance of the local landscape:

“I am a de-pollution technician. That is a nice way of putting it. We are involved in recovering stolen vehicles, DVLA vehicles, cars with no road tax, destroying vehicles environmentally.”

A social representation of the inclusiveness of the mining fraternity appears again in Philip’s interview when he explains how he became a de-pollution technician:

“My boss is an ex-miner and he likes to employ other ex-miners.”

This use of a social representation of mining as a world in which camaraderie holds sway is particularly powerful, as Philip’s redundancy from the NCB had occurred a full twenty years before his recent appointment. Philip seems to be drawing upon this to deny again the validity of the assumptions held by the education system; assumptions that Philip would continue to be a failure:

“It’s a bit of a...interesting story, you know, but I have always worked, I mean I have never been unable to generate money for myself. Yes but I do feel, coming back to school, I do feel that I can see how youngsters get scrapped.”

Philip talks at some length about his new work purpose, appearing to be using this opportunity to stress his own over-qualification for the role:

“We take all the toxic materials out of them, which is, you know child’s play basically, and then they are disposed of correctly within environmental ruling because it is very strict ruling now on cars. But we take all the toxic materials out first. Well what we do is we drain all the fluids out obviously, we drain all the fluids out because, it is quite simple and we obviously we remove the batteries, we remove the tyres... Yes, and we remove the tyres, oils, battery, air conditioning units and then the cars are crushed into a square [.....] Its, basically it is very similar to what I was doing before and obviously with the skills that I have learnt over the years, the car mechanics. I need a lot less up there. Obviously we are destroying rather than repairing them.”

A social representation of the value of ‘real world’ practical knowledge appears again at this point in Philip’s account, as he exhibits his own knowledge and understanding of the metal recycling process through a detailed description:

“Then actually the squares are taken then to a place in Newport Docks where it goes through what we call a fragmentiser, and it is quite interesting because, like, bits of plastic goes off, it gets chewed up into little pieces, I was looking at this plant although it has nothing to do with us, it is a different firm that we sell the metal to. And I don’t know if you are aware that metal at the moment is absolutely record sky high. Especially copper it is, raw materials like copper and brass and lead are a fortune and they never have been so high and they are all being shipped off and it is not stock piled anymore. It is not held it is literally fragmentiser is blowing it, as you call it, straight into the hub of a waiting boat. Obviously what we have got to take on board as well is the landfill tax of rubbish now is, am quoting on this, it is fantastic the landfill taxes, about £130 a tonne. Which comes back on household waste as well, and obviously the plastics and the rubber that are still remaining in the vehicle they are obviously, that comes out of the price of the scrap metal because then they got to go to the landfill site. Obviously the copper goes that way, the brass goes that way, it is a work, marvellous, a state of the art machine, it is a huge plant. Oh yes, you are talking about a multi million pound machine here, but you can bet your life that if you threw your old cooker out tomorrow and say somebody picks it up, the rag and bone man or whatever or you take it to the amenities, the council amenities tip it will eventually end up in that machine. We sell it to Simms, that is the firm in the docks and I think we get about £150 a tonne for what we call like irons, cookers and cars and stuff. We call that light iron rubbish basically, now I don’t know why I am quoting you all this.....”

At this point in the interview Philip’s account returns to issues of ‘near’ and ‘far’, and this emphasises a discontinuity in his account. Earlier he had drawn upon the training centre as a core of local power, a place in which he invested much of himself, and also upon the South Wales coalfield as an internationally respected region generating a globally desired product; the crossing of boundaries was advantageous to the locale. However, here Philip appears to be appropriating very different social representations of global recognition and power when he introduces China as a rapidly growing force that has become a worldwide centre of financial power. His account suggests that he is appropriating ‘China’ to express how the dissolution of boundaries in this context makes him feel vulnerable rather than powerful, thus he conveys a sense of fear for the future:

“Going back 5 years ago they were talking about bailing cars and putting them in landfill sites because before this boom in China, because China is expanding like, I think that China will take over the world on most of things. I watched an economic programme and they were saying that the commodities that they make there, everything is made in China. Like a few years ago everything cheap and nasty was made in China, as now things

are different. They are going to lead the world and I think that the rest of us in the world are going to have to travel because they are making things better and cheaper, you know, than yourself, you know. Which is interesting. I think that it is. And frightening as well.”

Philip’s interview suggests that he is drawing upon ‘China’ to express feelings concerning a lack, or loss of power. His appropriation of such a social representation of China appears to echo his use of a social representations of both the education system and the Government - that of a dominant ‘foreign’ force. Philip makes a direct comparison between China and South Wales by returning to the subject of the closure of the coal industry. He appears to be drawing upon social representations of China as an ever-increasing foreign power and South Wales as a diminishing contributor to the world stage in order to express both his concern for the future and his continued feeling that the decision to terminate the coal industry was an error of judgement.

“And, what I can understand is that somebody was telling me that 80% of cement that is made in the country is being shipped to China - 80%! Somebody was telling me that the other day and also, and shipping it to China. They are buying virtually all the scrap metal up in the world, as much as they can. Also they are buying up coal and apparently now there is a world shortage of coal, ironically and, like I was just telling you, about 20 years ago the coal industry had come to the end and Margaret Thatcher had decided to close everybody down and, ok, nobody wanted coal and nobody wanted fossil fuels anymore and so ‘bump’ that was it. It is strange how time changes things.”

5.2.10 Revisited Youthfulness

Philip pauses at this point in his interview to reflect on what he has just said.

When he begins speaking he brings us unexpectedly to the present interview setting:

“I normally come here on Tuesday nights anyway as Tom has told you, I normally come here because Tom is stuck in the house by himself and Susan has gone out and I like to come over here and have a drink, and I am sort of like tied and looking at the clock and I’m always thinking that I have got to go back to bed now, and that is a bit annoying, you know what I mean because, seven o’clock starts....I’m sort of like existing on sleeping at the moment and trying to socialise as well.”

His account suggests here that Philip is re-appropriating a social representation of the body to re-assert the physical consequences of the type of employment he undertakes. Whereas he earlier explains that his drilling rig work had almost killed him, here he describes the tiredness that results from his long workdays:

“What’s draining me is that I went out with some friends last night, we went down to Swansea and we had a few drinks and it was a lovely evening and Yes and then I am all right I can get to work on time but as soon as I come home from work at half 5 tonight now, oh god it was an effort to Yes it hit me, like, and I thought that I can’t wait to get in the bath, have a bite to eat and let’s get to bed for a couple of hours, that is where I have been. Well, Tom was ringing me to get here to meet you and it wasn’t waking me up, and a friend of mine I haven’t seen for a long time was desperate for a part for his car and was virtually kicking the front door to wake me up. Yes, obviously Tom was ringing me as well, and I must have come out of it. Because last Thursday Tom failed to wake me up. This is a very sad life, I went to bed last week, I think about half past 7 and I slept right through to half 5 to work in the morning. It is like I catch up you know, it is catch up you know.”

However, his account suggests that Philip’s job is actually causing him few physical problems, rather it is interfering with his newly re-discovered social life. In order to convey this Philip appears to be emphasising time and space through his mention of local people he has recently re-met. His interview here suggests a sense of both change and continuity:

“And I must admit you know, I am living a life now like I was when I was like 19 at the moment, I am going out a lot now. When I was with my partner, as a family I was like couple of cans on the settee, go to sleep and go to bed. You know I was contented, I was quite contented and now I am sort of like 17-year-old boy again. You know I am going out.....and only Saturday night I met an old girlfriend and I hadn’t seen her for 25 years, and her kids, I mean it frightened me as she had been married and her kids are grown up and she is back on the circuit you know and I am back on the circuit again. But I didn’t imagine that, I didn’t imagine it. I can’t imagine it. It is just bizarre. Well it is a bit bizarre, it is not sort of how I imagined life to be but there’s lots of good things that have happened as well, I was with someone last night and.... I am taking Tom out a lot as well, Tom is my driver, brilliant it is.”

5.2.11 The Car

‘The car’, a thread that has been underlying much of Philip’s interview, re-emerges here as he continues to describe his ‘new’ life. A social representation of the importance of machinery in the Ynysawdre locale was identified in chapter five, and Philip’s account suggests that he is drawing upon a specific social representation of cars as valued objects and associating his continued practice of caring for cars in order to counteract his identification as a wrecker of vehicles:

“And we have had some wonderful nights, you know. Wonderful nights. I bought myself a new car and that is a thing that I would never do before because I always have a car under the bin, the car that I have got outside now I have had for 20 years, my old Capri. It’s not practical, because everyday something falls off it, I take care of it, but you know there is no... It’s a sort of novelty, you couldn’t run a car like that. It’s not practical. Buying a new car, it’s the thing that I wouldn’t normally do because I have always liked old cars, I have got a passion for old cars and restoring old cars and that is the thing that I have always done.”

As Philip continues to talk about cars his account seems to suggest that the Ford Capri represents the recent past, the contentment of his earlier personal relationship, one he was unable to sustain. However, his purchase of a new sports model provides concrete evidence of his current participation in a more exciting social lifestyle:

“I bought a new one because I was down in the dumps, I didn’t have the time or the energy to keep the old Capri going and to keep the Land Rover going. I’ve got 3 vehicles that I am using, and I just saw that [Subaru] and thought ‘What the hell?’ I went and bought it, yes and I went berserk as well. Tom came with me. I said ‘Come with me. I am going to buy a new car’, ‘What is it? You are off your head!’ ‘Yes, well why not mate?’. I bought a Subaru Impreza WRX. It’s a youngster’s car. It’s like a boy racer’s car and I said ‘Why not?’ It’s only a couple of months old you know.”

Philip acknowledges that his behaviour is out of character with his usual adult practices, particularly when he speaks of the car as a ‘toy’ and himself as a ‘child’. However, he then seems to re-appropriate yet again a social representation of cars as valued status symbols in order to justify his decisions and actions:

“I just thought that it was a mid life crisis. I’m completely skint. I can always sell it but I thought what the hell and I thought, and at the time it was like, for what he was asking for it, it was a bargain because, like 6 months ago it was £21,000 and it has only done 5,000 miles and I bought it for £12,995, and I thought that was all right. That was all right that was, and I thought that well perhaps I can make a few shillings on it and so I have stopped using it at the moment for work. I’m using the old car and the Land Rover for work because it’s clocking the mileage up, and I just keep it for the weekends. The other thing is, it’s a very tempting toy to drive. It’s so nice. I’m like a child again.”

5.2.12 Summary

Throughout Philip’s account specific social representations are repeatedly appropriated in order for him to maintain a sense of coherence in his story. He uses social representations of education as distanced from the reality of the locale as justification for his inability to succeed academically. For Philip formal schooling was a humiliating experience and he consistently emphasises alternative social representations of physical, skilled work to present education as irrelevant within the community. He challenges the authority of teachers to label young people, citing their inability to recognise or understand his personal strengths. He also juxtaposes teachers with his father and other local men who did acknowledge and value his embodied knowledge and skills with machinery. Although he returns at intervals to his critique of the education system and does begin to acknowledge a recent change in the role of education in the lives of young people, Philip maintains a positive sense of identity through an account that privileges his embodied skills with machinery at the point of each life transition. Philip’s narrative does suggest that he carries oppositional social representations – he recognizes the power and importance of education, as well as the usefulness of practical ability. However, Philip uses specific aspects of social representations as symbolic resources to construct his account and present himself. He repeatedly emphasises that his ability to move forward has been due to his experiential knowledge and skills of the hands rather than his schooling.

5.3 'The Miner' - Richard's story

The structure of Richard's account differed from the majority of interviews in that his narrative was not chronologically ordered. Whereas the majority of interviewees related sequentially ordered sequences of life events, describing each period in some detail, Richard's narrative was dominated throughout by two overriding themes, previously identified in chapter 4 – 'health/illness' and 'mining' – and the interconnection between these. This dominance provides an example of how powerful thema generate networks of social representations with which people are able to make sense. Although Richard appropriates a range of social representations during the construction of his account, it is these two - 'health/illness' and 'mining' – that provide much of the resources with which he has forged, and is able to maintain a social identity.

Richard's experience of the traumatic transition from a healthy 'fit for purpose' miner to a man forced to retire due to failing health permeates much of his interview. Within the first three minutes of interview commencement Richard introduced the topic of his adult health problems, and although he did describe his schooling and training to some extent, Richard's narrative maintained a strong emphasis on the power of the physical body and what he portrayed as the breakdown of his own body. In order to acknowledge the ways in which the two themes - 'health/illness' and 'mining' - infuse Richard's account of other aspects of his life, this section has been structured by the dominant personal themes that emerged in Richard account, rather than a chronological organisation of transitions.

5.3.1 Childhood at school

Like most of the older male participants, Richard's account of his schooling was focused strongly on his early experiences at primary school, and Richard's description of entering the school system centres on what he remembers as '*a big ordeal*'. In his account Richard describes himself as a child who had been willing,

and to a certain extent able to learn, but who had been alienated by his school experiences. In order to communicate this Richard appears to draw upon a social representation, identified in the previous chapter, of the education system as a distant and uninvolved institution, and one that had abdicated its responsibility regarding the majority of the children of the Abertillery locale. In chapter 4 powerful social representations of schooling as divisive were suggested and Richard drew upon this to make sense of his early experiences of education. Richard repeatedly emphasises that he needed support and encouragement, but that neither was forthcoming:

“If you wasn’t gonna push yourself they didn’t care. I needed pushing all the time ‘cause, I wouldn’t say I’m dull but I ’m not brainy either, because I didn’t have a good start because, like I said when I started in the school, going back, there was nobody pushing you, nobody learning you properly ‘cause there were so many in the class. The teacher would say ‘Well this is what you’ve gotta do’...and if you asked, you have to wait, like ‘Well I gotta see so-and-so and so-and-so’ and by the time it came to you it was gone [*laughs*]...it was gone...you know if you didn’t ‘have it’....you know, you....they wouldn’t push it...well they couldn’t, there was too many in the class and that was that, and if you need that extra bit it just wasn’t there, because there was too many kids in the class.”

Richard seems to be appropriating a social representation of a system in which, from the very beginning of schooling lesser able boys were sidelined in the classroom to the benefit of more academically inclined children, and he appears to use ‘the system’ as a symbolic resource to legitimise his lack of engagement with education.

Throughout Richard’s account there is an emphasis on the ‘local’, the ‘familiar’ and the ‘known’. The previous chapter recognised a powerful social representation in Abertillery of ‘real world’ teaching, compared to the disconnected nature of the school system, and here Richard seems to be appropriating this to some extent when he directs the blame for his poor education. Like Philip in Ynysawdre, Richard appears to acknowledge the inability of local schoolteachers to ameliorate the effects of education system decisions. Though stating that teachers did not provide adequate support and encouragement, he frequently stresses that it was the class size (determined by an

external education system), rather than the class teacher (a well-respected resident of Abertillery) that was the problem:

“The learning side of it come very hard and I gotta be honest, the teachers wouldn’t...push you so much, you just went on. It just went on from there really..it was...there was too many kids in the classes and....it wasn’t...you wasn’t pushed so much...by them...and things like that you know...and um....we was just going on that way and as you were getting older you found that there was too many kids still in a lot of the other classes and you wasn’t pushed. Yes, it was a big class, it was forty plus, with just one teacher, Mrs Andrews. She was a Justice of the Peace over here and I know her son Bob.”

It is at this point, within the first three minutes of his interview (line 44 of 1,010), that Richard first presents his health problems, through his introduction of Bob while speaking of his primary schooling:

“I do go to classes now with Bob and he’s, how old is Bob? He’s sixty-nine, ‘cause I um, changing the subject, I had to finish work ‘cause I uh, busted my gut, working in the pit, and I ruined the sinews and nerves in my stomach.”

Here Richard makes a clear switch from matters of education to issues of the body. In the previous chapter a social representation of the body as a major source of power in the locale was recognized, and Richard seems to be using this to make sense of a traumatic transition, one that he appears to interpret as responsible for his dramatically altered sense of self. He explains that some days he still cannot face people - *‘I couldn’t sit here and talk to you ‘cause my nerves’d be gone’* - but that his recent medication has helped. Again, even as he appears to be describing difficulties relating to the mind, Richard’s emphasis of medication suggests a focus on the significance of the physical body. As in Philip’s narrative, there is a continued theme in Richard’s account that sets up ‘the mind’ and ‘the body’ in opposition. However, Richard’s main use of this appears to be to make sense of his ongoing health problems, rather than to evaluate academic and non-academic activities. Richard appropriates the dichotomy of body and mind throughout his interview, producing an account that is heavily weighted in favour of the importance of the male body, and that keeps the issue of his own health and fitness on or very near the surface, even while he briefly discusses other topics.

‘The body’ seems to underpin Richard’s identity, and during his interview he continues to draw upon social representations of the healthy and unhealthy body to present himself as a validated and valuable member of the mining community.

Following the introduction of his illness, Richard returns sharply to the topic of the teacher, Mrs Alcott, and her son Bob – ‘*But like I said Mrs Andrews was his mother and, Bob was a teacher as well, and I’d go to classes with him. Yeah, I’ve known the people all my life*’. Here Richard seems to be drawing again upon a social representation of community as a sense of belonging, emphasising both a sense of cohesion and one of continuity throughout the generations. To underpin this Richard appears to be also appropriating a powerful social representation of the connection between family and work; one that was identified in chapter 4 as recognising that work opportunities were strongly influenced by the employment of family members. This social representation provides heavily gendered cultural resources for the understanding of roles within the Abertillery locale. Richard explains why he expected and received no help with schoolwork from his parents:

“You, you couldn’t have it, ‘cause I was one of eleven children. There was thirteen in the one house, and that’s only two up, two down.”

Richard stresses here that even though he received little help or encouragement, he did achieve in certain school subjects:

“I was good at English. I come first in English, yeah [*laughs*], and there was a lot of um...well-educated girls in my class. Yeah, [*joking*] ‘cause I thought the teacher fancied me when I saw. Mrs Griffiths! Me first? I thought ‘Bloody hell!’....um...I’ve known my...wife....I’ve known her...ever since...we started courting when we was eleven, and when my wife, ‘cause she was in the class higher than me. ‘Cause she was a bit brainier than what I was. When she found out about that she said ‘Ah’ she said ‘There’s something up there’ she said [*laughs*]. Yeah. I was good in PT....I wasn’t no good in maths. It was too, too hard and that was it. I was good in geography...I was good in geography. Oh yeah, it was just that, oh I don’t know. It just used to go in one ear and out the other. I’d say if I’d’ve had a teacher...because I was one of them that needed that extra push, you know what I mean? I liked the lessons. Didn’t always understand them. But if somebody would’ve said ‘Oi, now come here, this is so-and-so’, you know.....”

Richard's references to school subjects suggest powerful connections with the locale in terms of roles and expectations. Chapter 4 identified strong social representations of participation in school subjects as influenced by both gender and class, and Richard seems to be drawing upon these in order to confirm that he did well in physical activities, excelling in bodily practices as working class boys in the locale were expected to do. He also appears to appropriate these social representations to emphasise the extent of his achievement in the female gendered subject of English, by stressing his attainment of higher grades than 'well-educated girls'. However, he expresses his own surprise that he did so well, joking that there must have been another reason for his good grade, although he does mention that, although his parents and brothers had been too busy, he had received some help with school work from his five older sisters until they left home:

"They got married then, all got married, all went away. A few of em's, dead now, obviously, but uh, older, a lot older."

However, Richard then goes on to comment that, even with the encouragement of his sisters, he reached a stage at which he had little interest in participating in education. The strong social representation of education as a large and powerful system that children were expected to negotiate appears again in Richard's account of his childhood activities. He provides little description of his schooling other than his repeated assertions that the classes were too big, which serves to paint a picture of a child who had felt ignored and lost and who was unable to find his way along the education route, and who subsequently stepped off that pathway. However, though he implies that his teachers did not stimulate his interest, he does not choose to re-introduce here his negative experiences of being overlooked at school, but instead describes both himself and a preferred activity. Thus in order to express his disconnection from formal education he appears to be drawing upon a number of strongly interlinked social representations to present a positive image of himself:

"By that time, to be quite honest with you, I think I wasn't caught, I didn't wanna learn then. I was a little bugger you know *[laughs]*. We'd go up the mountain instead with a piece of cardboard or, anything sliding down the

mountain, anything like that you know. Oh, there was a lot of us, I tell you, I could name 'em. There was a lot of us the same 'cause, there's friends now you know what I mean, I do see 'em now and they say 'If we'd only done a bit better in school', but the thing was, at that time, uh, going through life, I know we, it's stupid, you've gotta learn, in the last twenty, thirty years to get a job, but back then you didn't have to. Because I think it was bred in all of us that we wanted to go down the pit or down the foundry."

Again issues of the physical body appear to underpin Richard's account. He seems to be returning to the mind/body opposition by drawing upon a social representation of local children as physically active, mischievous scamps disregarding the mental activity of the school to engage in strenuous games. Richard's mention of 'sliding down the mountain' implies that the children recognized and accepted the physical dangers provided by both the environment and the activity. This theme of shared recognition and acceptance of danger is presented much more explicitly and powerfully later in Richard's account of his life as a miner.

By telling this story of truancing Richard also appears to be drawing upon social representations of 'locale' that relate to both physical geography and the social. The Abertillery landscape is presented as a familiar and popular playground involving shared local knowledge and understanding. This suggests Richard is re-appropriating a social representation of the Abertillery locale as a close-knit community. He also makes no mention of sanctions against truancing children. Thus his presentation of the locale as relatively accepting of such behaviour suggests that the children's projected futures were shared by members of the community. This supports Richard's earlier assertions that children in Abertillery were rarely pushed to achieve academically. Richard's description of a school visit to a working mine at the age of twelve, his only mention of his time in secondary school, further emphasises how powerfully his future was guided from an early age by the education system and work patterns operating in the Abertillery locale during the 1950s:

"When I was in school, um, how old was we? Twelve or thir...twelve, we was taken up to Oakdale pit, and we went down the pit, with a teacher and...I tell you what, ninety-five per cent of us up there we were buzzing,

‘cause we loved it, and we all said ‘Oh that’s for us’, ‘cause it...it was lovely, and we couldn’t wait to leave school then and go down the pit.’”

Richard’s declaration that working in heavy industry was ‘bred in us’ suggests that he is attempting to convey a level of inevitability concerning his work desires, choices and opportunities. To communicate this he seems to be drawing upon a social representation, identified in chapter 4, of traditional men’s work in the locale as labour undertaken by each new generation within a family to explain why he and so many local boys opted to become miners. However, taken in the context of the many references to the body contained in Richard’s account, another suggestion comes into focus, Richard also appears to be appropriating a social representation of local men as naturally suited to mining - later in the interview he asserts that mining ‘*is in my blood*’ - and his description of visiting the mine as a child suggests that this only stimulated and strengthened an inborn desire:

“It was in me ‘cause my father and my grandfather...I think it was just, running in it, .my grandfather on both sides you know what I mean? It was in us. All my brothers you know what I mean?”

5.3.2 Employment

5.3.2.1 *Mining: the valuable body*

It is while Richard speaks of his move from school to the adult world of work that he begins to convey his understanding of power in the locale and, while different notions of power come to the fore during his account, the relationship between the healthy, fit body and the power of the miner is particularly strongly emphasised throughout, as is the relationship between the strong body and the physical landscape, specifically the mine. However, it is when speaking of his days as a miner that Richard appropriates social representations of the body as the source of physical, psychological and social power particularly strongly. For Richard, mining appears to be the origin of the ‘optimal body’.

Notions of the body permeating Richard's account include those of the *physical* 'body as machine', with an emphasis on the body as a specialised mining machine, and the *symbolic* 'body as metaphor'. Richard has incorporated ways of being valued into his understandings of the body, and the healthy and powerful male form has come to represent much that is valuable to him. Richard's entire sense of self appears to be constructed through the lived body acting and communicating within a particular time and place. Through his bodily experience within a mining community at a time of prosperity comes his understanding of the world, of his positioning within it and of possibilities for his future. These forms of knowledge allowed Richard to participate effectively in the world and to see himself in a positive way, and they guide his reflection during his account.

- Physical power

Social representations of the body saturate Richard's account of his education and work trajectory, and the experience of living within his own body, along with the associated emotions, dominates the interview, driving Richard's narrative. From an early age Richard appears to have invested greatly in his own body, and his account suggests that he makes meaning through physical activities, and his desire to use his body. He had earlier talked about participating in sports as a child, which made him fit and a fast runner, and his talk conveys the childhood exhilaration of taking risks and pushing his body to extremes. He described 'sliding down the mountain' on a tea tray or piece of cardboard, and of riding bareback on the local wild mountain horses – the freedom of his body interacting with the natural landscape. He now speaks of his life as a miner in terms of the physical benefits his interaction with the physical environment conferred upon him, and of the physical risks of working in a dangerous environment.

Throughout Richard's interview a notion of the body as a 'machine' is suggested. He appears to be appropriating social representations of the fit body to suggest that his own body was honed and moulded to operate as a coal miner; through the physical effort of mining his muscles, sinews and nerves were trained to create a specialised mining machine. Richard seems to be appropriating social

representations of mining as conferring physical benefits that enhanced his life both below and above ground in order to make sense of his physical and psychological investment. Richard's continuing reference to the physical power of miners corresponds with Philip's declarations of the physical strength needed by NCB workers. However, while Philip, in Ynysawdre, stated that the labour requirements of mining nearly killed him, Richard's account indicates that he saw the physical challenges to be a positive element of his employment:

"It was hard work mind, but you got used to it, and I was more fitter. I was as fit as a butcher's dog. Yeah, as fit as anything, really fit."

Here Richard reintroduces the strong social representation of the body as the prime source of power in a locale that relied on heavy industry for employment, and seems to be appropriating this in order to describe the ease with which he made the transition from school to mining. Unlike Philip, Richard declares that he both liked, and was successful at physical education at school, explaining that he had possessed a naturally high level of strength and fitness. By drawing upon this he appears to be conveying a sense that it was his ability to physically withstand the rigours of the work enabled him to maintain his position as a miner. Particularly, Richard appears to draw upon this notion of 'natural' bodily strength to explain the speed with which his strong body enabled him to inure himself to the demands of the job, and with which he was able to achieve the status of archetypal miner:

"Oh I was excellent at PT, always fit like, I was always strong...I tell you what, going back to when I was working in the pit, the work in the pit, you know what I mean, I was fit, but when I went underground you get twelve yards of coal off, you know what I mean? And that's a lot of coal, a lot of coal, but, I tell you, within a fortnight I was as fit as a butcher's dog...you know what I mean? It really got me fit."

Richard's account suggests throughout that he completely identifies with the world of mining, and he works hard to present himself as having been an effective miner, the possessor of a 'productive body'. To do this Richard appears to draw upon interrelated social representations relating to the body and the power of miners. He spoke earlier in the interview of mining being in his blood, suggesting

that he is appropriating a social representation of the body as predisposed to specific types of work, and that he sees his own body as having been totally suited to mining. Here again, Richard's account differs from Philip's; while Philip emphasises his natural skill and ability to master machinery, Richard's narrative supports the view that he saw his body *to be* a mining 'machine', a specialised mining 'tool'.

- Identity

Richard's interview conveys that, while the physical benefits of mining are strongly at the forefront of his account, for him 'the body' carries so much more than this. His narrative suggests that success as a miner equates with success as a person, and his account suggests that he is drawing upon a particularly strong social representation of miners as possessing an extremely positive position within the locale in order to associate himself with power and status within the locale. The execution of such strenuous work resulted in miners developing strong, adaptable bodies, bodies that signified value and power within Richard's locale. Importantly, it is Richard's own body that appears to have become for him a key symbolic resource through which he is able to think about, and understand himself. His talk suggests that his body became a site for the autonomy and control that Richard experienced as a fully participating miner. Thus in addition to the strength of his physical body, Richard also uses the metaphor of the body to represent much that is valuable to him. The able miner's body becomes a physical manifestation of a social representation of the valuable, respected man; a notion that incorporates a range of aspects, including belonging, status, a sense of purpose, money, pride and productivity. Richard's account provides insight as to how he understands the relationship between the miners and the locale. In chapter 4 a social representation was established of mining, and miners, as providing former farming areas with a new prosperous industrial identity, an identity that was subsequently lost along with the miner's employment with the NCB. When Richard makes reference to the existence of men's clothes shops in Abertillery he appears to be appropriating this to reassert that the miner *was* the locale, and without the miner, the locale is severely diminished:

“It was in, nineteen sixty-one. I tell you what you could buy anything. You could buy, you could buy jeans for nine and nine-pence, right. You could buy a t-shirt for sixpence, a white t-shirt, right and you’d go over the shop over here, you know he would have all the leather jackets. We had all the shops in those days. It was unbelievable. We were a big town when the mines were going good.”

- Employability

The notion of the power of miners was further suggested by his appropriation of a social representation, identified in chapter 4, of miners as sought after workers, undertaking practices much more ‘real’ and relevant than those related to education. By alluding to the rapid growth of the local coal industry Richard is able to further assert the power of miners through the ease of employment they enjoyed. In telling of this Richard returns once again to the physicality of miners; a social representation of miners as physically strong appears again in Richard’s description of his Uncle’s altercation with a mine official:

“There wasn’t enough men to go round, not enough to go round. I can remember that my, missus’ uncle, Uncle Bill, he did have a run in with the under manager on pit bottom, and he said to the under manager he said ‘If you don’t F off from here he said I’ll chuck you in the sump, and this is true, right, and he said ‘You are sacked’. He said ‘I don’t care’ he said ‘The manager up Rose Heyworth have got a big net’ he said ‘He’s dragging ‘em in there’. He said ‘Well I’ll make sure you don’t get a job up there’, but he did, he did get one, and that’s the truth. It was dead easy. If the under manager come down and he, you know, he started to give you a bollocking you could go, uh, you could swear at him. Yeah, and you’d go up Cwmtillery and you’d have another job. Yeah, and that’s how easy it was, because, my brother-in-law worked in Cwmtillery pit, and, he lived up the Swffryd, and, the Aber[*inaudible*] pit approached him, to work up there ‘cause he only lives, straight across, from there, they said ‘Come here, we’ll give you a new house down in the Swffryd’. He said ‘I’ve got one’. They said ‘We’ll give you a better house.’”

Richard’s description of this episode also emphasises space and place, by drawing upon those social representations of ‘above and below ground’ that were identified in chapter 4. The related encounter took place ‘on pit bottom’, the miner’s domain, where miners become a particularly united force and ‘outsiders’ - NCB

employees who do not engage in the real 'below ground' bodily practices of extracting coal - are barely tolerated.

Richard's account suggests that by appropriating social representations of the body as a metaphor for physical, social and employment 'value' he is able to take up different layers of power, which he wears throughout the interview, as he would layers of clothing or coal dust, and these layers confer status and authority. These layers include physical power, but also the power conferred by membership of a cohesive group. Richard's account draws heavily and often upon social representations of miners as a powerful and militant body of men that were recognised in chapter 4. These men were well able to withstand the pressures placed upon them by 'officials' – foremen and managers who did not do the real 'body work' of the mines.

- Financial power

Financial power was also strongly referenced in Richard's account. He frequently draws upon social representations of mining as a relatively lucrative career, compared to alternative employment for men in Abertillery. To talk about his move from school to work Richard focuses clearly and often on the earning power attached to different work and training trajectories, and again invokes 'the productive body' to counteract the status of those undertaking apprenticeships that involved episodes of college education:

“At that time, that's where the money was, you know what I mean...you didn't need qualifications...you did not need 'em. David'll tell you. David started in the butcher's down by here. He was only getting one pound fifty a week! I'm getting six pound something. David, I've known David all his life, he was a ...uh...then he joined as an electrician, but he had to go through with not having the money that I was having, and he's two or three years older than me...I was getting more money than him because I was going on the face shifting coal...but David was an electrician, he was going to...night school and all that, but he wasn't getting the money, and at that time, and they'd say 'Oh you'll have your qualifications in four or five years time'. I said 'Well I'm having the money now!', that's what it is, the money come in right up 'til...*[whistles quietly while thinking]*...seventy-

six...seventy-seven...big money, you know, more than what other people was getting, .you know what I mean.”

Richard’s voice became stronger and faster and his manner buoyant when he stressed the financial rewards attached to mining, employment that did not require academic achievement. Chapter 4 identified a strong representation of miners as a body of men possessing an earning potential considered high in South Wales, and Richard seems to be using this to counteract the status of those workers who had completed an apprenticeship. Richard specifically compares his earnings to those of a friend who underwent training to become an electrician. This suggests that he is also re-appropriating a social representation of education as disconnected from ‘real’ life in the locale. While David used his mind to train as an electrician, Richard’s body was meant for relatively highly paid face-work, thus he was the one with both physical and financial strength.

This social representation of the healthy body as the major source of power appears again in his account of becoming a contributor to the household finances. By providing such a clear picture of the financial opportunities mining endowed Richard was able to communicate his pride in the personal buying power his physical labour allowed him:

“I tell you what, I used to give my mother...I used to give my mother a fiver. Our mam, she’d never seen that type of money.... ‘Right’, she said, ‘Richard I don’t want all this’, and I used to have about, just under two pound pocket money and I could not spend it by the next week. You could buy anything. I tell you what you could buy anything. You could buy, you could buy jeans for nine and nine-pence, right. You could buy a t-shirt for sixpence, a white t-shirt, right and you’d go over the shop over here, you know he would have all the leather jackets. It was unbelievable. We was on big money. It was big money. In the early fifties the money wasn’t there mind, but coming back up, when the unions had a bit more strength, like the steelworks, they started giving you the money then.. Like I said that was big money....[*very quietly*] big money...big money.....absolutely big money.....it was....couldn’t spend it....our mam she...she...when I gave her a fiver...unbelievable...she said ‘I don’t want all that Richard’...I said ‘Mam you have it...you’ve never had it’.....because all my brothers had their money...they give our mam a certain amount.....I said ‘Oh you have it mam..you’ve never had it’....I’m not...blowing my own trumpet but I didn’t want it....so..it was big money

and that was it.....but....as regards of anything else....that was the best job....best thing you could do.”

In chapter 4 strong social representations of masculinity were acknowledged that positioned men as the breadwinners, and Richard’s account suggests that he is appropriating these in order to make sense of his adult role as a miner, even though at that time he was unmarried and lived with his parents. He explains that through physical exertion he was able to improve the lifestyle of his mother, and throughout his account he constructs fundamental associations between the body, money, opportunity and status. He describes occupying a position of relative privilege regarding high wages, employability and identification with an occupation that endowed the entire region with positive recognition, and his narrative suggests that he sees this to be a result of possessing a healthy, hard, *powerful* body.

5.3.2.2 *Embodied practice, embodied knowledge*

Richard’s notions of mining were all based on the body - embodied practice, embodied knowledge. Richard seems to be drawing upon a powerful social representation of miners as a cohesive band of men who shared much that was important in their lives in order to assert his own value as a member of this community. He speaks of the knowledge and training each must undergo, emphasising the shared aims of the community of miners and the vocabulary and language they use to make sense of their lives. Richard’s account strongly emphasises the intimacy of miner’s bodies sharing a physical space and their shared experiences underground. His talk privileges the physical landscape - the separate world that mining provides and the threat that is present there. He appears to appropriate a social representation of the miner as unified and resilient, able to recognise, to ‘know’, the set of dangerous possibilities that exist underground. He presents this as the common enemy of miners, involving gas, explosions and landslides.

5.3.2.3 Training: *The body as a vessel*

Richard's mention of the sixteen-week training all miners had to undertake continues to suggest the pervasiveness of the body in Richard's account. He relates training to physical danger and the safety procedures designed to avoid physical harm:

“Well you had to put props up to hold the roof up. You had to do all that you know what I mean. First aid. How to put packs up to hold walls up underground. To hold the ceiling up you had to build bricks, to hold it all up. Lots of different things. Test gas, test for gas. You know you had to have an oil lamp, test the gas from the ground. They gave you an oil lamp, and you would turn your light off, turn him down and test for the little blue light, and then he would come up. But they got meters and that now. But the men wasn't allowed to have them. Only the fireman. A special man was allowed to have the, the meters. They came in later on. But you could still test pretty good with a lamp.”

Richard re-asserts the primacy of the body in his talk of his miner's training. He appears to appropriate a powerful social representation circulating in the Abertillery locale relating to the power of experiential knowledge gained through physical labour in the collieries. He explains that he respected his trainers as they ‘...knew what they were talking about’ and ‘....had gone through it’. Richard's training served to make his body a specialised mining machine, embodying knowledge that could be used underground for the shared purpose of extracting coal.

The financial benefits he speaks of are available only to those who are both physically able to participate in the practices and mentally strong enough to withstand the constant risk of danger threatened by the mining environment. Richard's interview highlights the extent to which the physical ground gave his life meaning, and by appropriating social representations of a distinct and elite ‘below ground’ community, his account suggests the shared understandings of that community regarding the prevailing risk of roof falls, explosions and other dangers. These were dangers the ‘above ground’ community were aware of, but could not fully ‘know’ as the miners did, through bodily interaction with the physical environment. Richard again appropriates social representations of ‘the

body' to make sense of the practices that have substantially defined him, both below and above ground:

“When we was working in that type of condition...you would always keep a look out for each other, you know what I mean? We wouldn't be too far from each other. You'd always, like work in pairs, or work in a bunch. You always looked out for each other and it was, it was very, very, like that you know? You was paired off in, in butties. You would umm, you'd always, people in the next dent would always look out for you, and you would look out for them. Very close. Very close. It was like your next door neighbour, with the door open.”

Richard's references to danger and safety suggest that he is using a notion of 'the body as a vessel'. He appears to be speaking of his body as something that can be filled with relevant knowledge; knowledge that can only be gained from physical experience. Richard's account seems to be suggesting that, in addition to keeping strong for physical work he is investing in his body in terms of responsibility and purpose; he must take care of his body as the knowledge and expertise it 'contains' serves the community, not merely himself. Identified in chapter 4 were social representations relating to work-related training as 'real world' learning, and Richard appears to appropriate these to convey the necessity of miner's training:

“First aid. I done first aid. You had to do first aid, you had to. If you didn't pass your first aid you couldn't go in the pit. They would make you sit it again and sit it again until you passed it. You gotta save lives see. I've seen some bad accidents down there and that's it. Mmmm, .you had to pass that or you couldn't go in there.”

To talk about the risk of danger underground Richard appropriates and brings together specific social representations of the body, masculinity, power, community, social roles, training and the land. These are social representations stemming from a past world that has been buried along with the coal mines. However, for Richard these remain the key symbolic resources he relies upon to maintain coherence throughout his interview

5.3.3 Ill- health: The broken body

Paralleling the breakdown of coal mining in the Abertillery locale is Richard's story of the breakdown of his own body. Richard appears to be continuing to appropriate social representations of the body as a driving force in order to make sense of the negative changes in his circumstances. His account suggests that his sense of self as a worker - a specialised mining 'machine' - had been rooted in the body, and his subsequent declining physical health now dominates his notions of who he is and how he can think of his future.

Richard's life as a miner was ended abruptly by health problems when he was in his thirties, and when he is talking of this transitional period, social representations of miners as physically strong re-appear yet again in Richard's account as he reaffirms the sense of power his healthy strong body endowed him with, in order to convey the sense of loss that he sees as inextricably linked to the breakdown of his body. Richard frequently declares his prior physical fitness and each time contrasts it with his later health problems. His account suggests that he is re-appropriating social representations of 'the body as machine' to explain how his body 'broke' and he became unable to work. As he describes the physical breakdown of his body he repeatedly points to the area of his solar plexus, explaining that this is the 'engine' of the body where his nerves were damaged.

The domination of Richard's interview by his talk of his loss of health and subsequent long-term ill health was made all the more evident by the extent to which he talked *with* his body. The physical nature of his communication appeared to mirror not only his loss of physical strength, but also the extreme psychological and emotional experiences of the transition. During his interview Richard initially spoke of himself as an integral part of a close-knit fellowship; one that that endowed him with a high level of social confidence both below and above ground, and his bodily movements while he was talking presented a physical manifestation of the confidence he enjoyed. He became extremely animated - leaning forward, using expansive gestures, a loud voice, laughter and a wide smile when describing his former self and life in glowing terms. However, while talking about his life since his health problems began his demeanour was in

direct contradiction with this energetic form of communication. He displayed a small and still presence, using hushed tones, lowered eyes and a 'closed', body position, laying his arms across his abdomen. Indeed both his speech and non-verbal communication during talk of life after mining supports the notion of two 'different' people; a notion that Richard introduces and maintains throughout his interview. His account of the onset of his health problems suggests that without engagement in the bodily practices of mining Richard is relatively unable to be agentive, no longer able to continue specific activities in a particular physical and social space and thus his talk suggests that he feels he has become another person:

“Yeah....yeah...from that time to now I still feel a different....it's like something died that...when I had that...a different life now...I've been told it do happen.”

Richard's description of something 'dying' when his body 'broke' supports the argument that body and thought are not separate. Richard's account clearly suggests that he is unable to continue thinking as, or being, the same person following such a radical change in physical circumstances. However, Richard himself insists on such a dualism by repeatedly suggesting that his health problems are physical and that even his inability to function mentally - “...*at one time I couldn't sit here and talk to you 'cause my nerves'd be gone....*” - are due to physical problems. One striking discontinuity occurs on a number of occasions during Richard's interview. The breakdown of his body is almost continually at the forefront of his narrative. However, although he states five times during his interview that he 'bust his gut', at no time does he describe how this occurred. This was particularly noticeable, as he appears keen to describe his mining accidents and those of colleagues, and eager to explain the dangers of mining. The cause of his ill health is a glaring omission in an interview dominated by social representations of the body. In addition to his appropriation of social representations of masculinity and the healthy body, Richard invokes a medical discourse – a social representation of 'acceptable', or 'real' illness as somatic. When he states that “I busted my gut”, he frequently touches the region of his solar plexus, and explains:

“Well I know mine’s not in the mind...it’s all in the guts, and the doctor told me this.”

However, he refers to some level of physical recovery, suggesting that it is his psychological symptoms that prevented his return to work:

“I busted my gut and all that. I loved work. I got better, but I still couldn’t go back down the pit, and I loved it, I absolutely loved it. It’s like I used to love playing skittles and all that...then I couldn’t hold a bloody ball. I’d shake like that...*[demonstrates how his hands shook]*.”

Even though he acknowledges a psychological element to his incapacity, Richard still appears to be appropriating social representations of men as ‘rational’, physical beings who function well when their bodies are healthy and only falter when their bodies ‘break’ in some way. Richard has medicalised his body and this is how he is able to think and talk about himself. His account suggests a level of embarrassment or shame that he suffers from ‘stress’ and that this prevents him from working, and also indicates how his own psychological suffering has changed his ideas of mental illness:

“I’m being honest, you know....at one time I wouldn’t....speak about it but.....at one time I wouldn’t, *[almost inaudible:]* at one time I wouldn’t. *[Louder:]* It’s like being in a dark room and everything’s closing in on you. It’s dreadful...mind you I gotta be honest, when I was well I would’ve said to anybody else like, ‘Pull yourself together. What’s the matter with you, you stupid sod?’ and all that.”

Richard’s appropriation of social representations of traditional masculinity throughout his interview suggests that following his sudden, dramatic reduction in health his body became for him a symbol of failure, disability and constraint, and that he has struggled with his subsequent social relocation:

“I was an harum scarum bugger there’s no doubt about it. I was as fit as a butcher’s dog and I would do anything, fight anybody, as lots of youngsters would do. But then when I had this it...sshh...really slowed me down *[very quietly:]* definitely...definitely. Yeah, .yeah, from that time to now I still feel different.”

His account suggests that following this rupture of the life that he had taken for granted experienced particular difficulty negotiating the transition. To achieve this in his interview he appears to continue to draw heavily on a social representation that persists in his locale and that is still appropriated by many of Richard's generation. This is one of masculinity as strongly related to the physically demanding work of heavy industry. He repeatedly compares his life now to his life when he could fully participate in the activities of mining, and his talk highlights the extreme physical, emotional and psychological changes he has experienced. Richard's references to his interactions with others in his locale suggest a striking change in his engagement with his local community, a change that began when his health 'went downhill'. For example:

"This is at my level, me and you talking. But that isn't, you know what I mean, it's not, it wasn't... Before it wouldn't have bothered me you know, since I, I been trying to push my way and that 'cause when you got nervous trouble like I got you shy away from things like that, and it isn't always the right thing to do. Yeah, I've sat in a chair and I haven't spoken to nobody for days and days and days. It's a terrible effort, you know. Some days you just couldn't do it, but you might get worse and worse."

5.3.3.1 Membership of 'stress class': mind - body

Throughout his interview, Richard invokes a body/mind opposition. Although he describe psychological symptoms, he repeatedly appropriates 'the body as machine' to declare a somatic origin for his illness. He does this even while describing his membership of 'stress class', a local group mainly consisting of ex-miners organised by a mental health nurse. While continuing to draw upon a medical discourse, Richard appears able to relate it here to familiar social representations of masculinity and also miners as a cohesive group, a clique who share experience, knowledge and understanding. Richard's account continually suggests the reification of notions of masculinity; while he does not explicitly discuss 'masculinity' he appears to be using 'the miner' as a symbolic resource to express his own sense of masculinity.

Throughout the interview he appears to be using 'miners' as a symbolic resource to convey his sense of status as an able-bodied miner at a time that mining underpinned the dominant discourse in the locale, and here he holds on to this to convey the extreme changes in identity work he and his contemporaries have undergone. Richard's account conveys powerfully his sense of loss of masculinity as it is encapsulated in the identity of 'miner', and he communicates this by appropriating an alternative social representation of miners that contradicts the one in which he has invested so much. He uses the notion of a generation of physically tough men who have been rejected, and often damaged, both physically and mentally. He describes a group of miners who suffer from 'stress', and again uses a medical discourse as a symbolic resource by emphasising how this is recognised by the medical profession, that medically qualified people work with them:

"It's, it's stress classes it is. Stress classes. We've got a qualified psychiatric nurse coming there. We go up to see the doctor every now and then and we got them. Mostly miners, but there is a lot of others. It did start off with miners. It was mostly miners but we've opened it up now because we started running it ourselves. We've started running it, oh how many years is it now? Ten...twelve...thirteen years ago. It was only miners then. We was getting, how many of us? Twenty-six, twenty-seven of us. I think there's about fourteen, fifteen of us now. But we have opened it up to other people. We even got a couple of women coming as well."

Richard's demeanour and voice changed when he spoke of his visits to the stress class, and he appeared to become the same contented and animated Richard that had earlier emerged in the interview when he spoke of his experience of, and liking for coal mining. Richard's description of his membership of the stress class suggests that this is a community of practice that offers him an alternative, but still positive mining identity due to a shared appropriation of a social representation of miners as betrayed, but resilient and active. The interactions between the men here suggest that the community of practice allows a return to certain patterns of interaction with which they are comfortable, and which underpin the recognition and acceptance the men require as ex-miners. This interaction contrasts sharply with Richard's description of his unsympathetic attitude, as a working miner, towards colleagues suffering from stress or depression.

5.3.3.2 *The loss of mining – losing the ‘strong body’*

Richard talks through the body about the termination of mining in the locale. He appears to draw heavily upon social representations of miners as a productive physical force to convey a sense of rejection and betrayal by the British Government, which was led by a more powerful and efficient ‘machine’, Margaret Thatcher:

“I tell you when it stopped. With, everybody, everybody will say the same. She broke everyone up she did and, not, not knocking her ‘cause maybe it was her thing, but she even split the neighbours up in your own home. Because nobody wouldn’t talk any more. They wouldn’t, and there was the same in the pit. She split them up, and a lot of industry. She was very cunning, and I take my hat off to her, take my hat off to her.”

Richard had earlier associated his own strong body with mining and even though he had been unable to physically participate in mining practices underground for more than a decade before the mines were closed, Richard’s account suggests that he nonetheless shared the emotions of the miners themselves when the closures occurred. Although no longer a miner, the presence of the mines had allowed Richard to hold on to the identity of ‘miner’ – powerful, physical and productive. He maintained some semblance of ‘the mining machine’ through the knowledge he still carried. The bodily experiences and the understandings that he shared with working miners had continued to affirm his membership of an active and high status community, and allowed him to maintain a sense of continuity. Richard’s talk suggests that with the loss of the coal industry the strength and unity of miners was broken, and although not directly affected by the redundancies, Richard’s continued references to his own ‘broken’ body reflect his loss of the means by which he made sense of his own life. Richard’s broken physical body parallels the shattered and unwanted body of miners who had fought for their livelihoods and identities.

5.3.4 The Museum – enlivening ‘the body’

Richard’s account highlights the ways that he relocates himself in mining, through spending time with social groups that maintain a direct association with mining practices. His talk suggests that the museum is a conduit through which Richard can re-enter the mines, can continue to appropriate social representations of mining. To convey this Richard emphasises his role as a resident expert regarding the use of mining artifacts, which further suggests his appropriation of ‘the body’. He is using the mining equipment to exhibit his embodied knowledge of mining, and his mastery and manipulation of objects re-enliven the meanings associated with them. In his interview Richard describes himself as a key team member, and in order to talk during his interview about his own contribution at the museum Richard re-appropriates a social representation of miners as an elite group with a unique knowledge and understanding of the industry and its effects on the locale. Richard appears to draw heavily on social representations of the coal industry in the 1950s and 60s to talk about the bodily experience of mining, and at the museum he has the opportunity to introduce others to the related artifacts; the tools and equipment that shaped activity and action below ground.

Richard’s account suggests that this group of volunteers comprises an alternative ‘mining’ community of practice that he has found to be valuable. He appears to draw upon powerful social representations of mining and the body to re-activate a sense of autonomy through his involvement in physical and social activities that promote memories of himself as a core member of coal mining. Through his talk of the museum he presents himself as someone with the ability to succeed, someone who possesses valuable knowledge and understanding that is accumulated through *action*, through bodily experience of that world. He returns a number of times to his belief that subsequent generations, with no experience of mining, cannot share this understanding:

“I went up there [*Cwmtillery Lakes*], taking the dog round the pond, and you can see all of the red water running out of these ponds and that. It’s all coming out of the, where the pits was, look. Bound to come up and up and up and it runs out. You could tell straight away, you know. It’s old workings. Youngsters now wouldn’t know what it was - ‘Look at that red water!’ - and they wouldn’t know what it is. It’s workings, old workings.”

This narrative also illustrates how individuals defend themselves by defending their group (social identity theory). Although not explicitly naming or describing ‘miners’, Richard nonetheless constructs a boundary between those who ‘know’ and those who cannot ‘know’. He uses his membership of the group ‘miners’, a group who ‘knows’, as affirmation of a continuing positive social identity rooted in the past.

5.3.5 Summary

Richard’s account of his education and work trajectory is based entirely around notions of ‘the body’. Richard appears to have invested so much in the dominant social representation of the strong, fit miner that he is unable to think of himself through means other than the body. He speaks of his development as a miner in terms of becoming a specialised mining machine, and of his subsequent physical decline as the breakdown of that machine. This breakdown is used to explain his continued membership of the mining community. Physical damage to miners is understood and accepted, as is their retirement when they are unable to function effectively as part of the system, and Richard has been able to transfer to an affiliated group of damaged miners. Richard has also found a way to maintain a connection with social representations of mining through his participation at the museum, and uses this to continue to present mining as the lifeblood of the locale. Formal education plays only a minor role in Richard’s story, ‘the school’ is an institution he was required to attend as a child, but this held very little meaning for him, serving as a hiatus on the route to mining and ‘real’ adult life.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The accounts of Richard and Philip have demonstrated that the themes identified in chapter 4 do constitute social representations. They illustrate the ways in which ideas circulating in a locale are appropriated by individuals in order to construct a narrative about experiences of education and work. The accounts have shown how Richard and Philip have used particular aspects of social representations as

symbolic resources to make sense of the transitions they have experienced.

Though the coal industry features in both narratives, each man has dealt with the rupture of its demise in a way that is personal to them. It has been demonstrated in the previous chapter how the two communities each have specific features that have allowed certain kinds of social representations to circulate, and in this chapter it can be seen how these have re-emerged in both Richard's and Philip's accounts. Their personal narratives have been both limited and facilitated by the social, economic and geographical features of the areas in which they live. The historical legacy of mining has permeated their narratives and set parameters within which they have been able to take up and use social representations. It has constrained the ways in which they were able to make meaning, by privileging manual labour and embodied knowledge.

However, while historical mining practices have underpinned the circulation of specific social representations in both communities, each locale possesses geographical and topographical specificity. Abertillery, in its narrow valley had relatively poor transport links, resulting in relative isolation from larger towns and cities. This allowed social representations to develop in particular ways in a distinct community. The Abertillery community relied almost exclusively on mining for its support, due to its rich coal seams and high productivity the town had the economic infrastructure to provide for its inhabitants. Abertillery residents could access much that they needed within the town borders. Richard's account demonstrated the dependency of many of the older community members on past mining practices, as he took up and used mining as a symbolic resource for all that was positive about Abertillery and about himself. In his account he constructed the failure of the coal industry, the decline of manual labour and the de-valuing of a community as a parallel with his own physical ill health and reduced productivity.

By contrast Ynysawdre had not experienced the economic independence of Abertillery. There is no town centre and community members have always expected to travel outside the locale for employment and shopping opportunities. This has been facilitated by good road and rail links. As a result Ynysawdre has not been isolated in the way that Abertillery has been, and the social representations that have developed in the community have not been so narrowly

focused on the coal industry. Philip's account has shown how he could take up social representations of manual labour and use them to support a future involving work outside the locale, outside the mining industry.

The narrative analysis has also highlighted how knowledge and sense-making is based upon themata (Moscovici, 1992, in Markova, 2003). Although the data collection instruments presented the education/work opposition, others, including those relating to masculine/feminine, above/below, dirt/cleanliness, physical/mental, and healthy/unhealthy arose relatively spontaneously in the accounts. The accounts also suggest that networks of social representations these oppositions have generated, have been appropriated by Philip and Richard in particular ways in the construction of their accounts. The interviews of both Philip and Richard clearly suggest that they recognize opposing social representations (cognitive polyphasia), they appropriated particular core and/or periphery elements of specific social representations when talking about transitional periods.

The following chapter is an analysis of the development of the social representations of a community over time. The focus of the chapter is Abertillery and it illustrates how dominant practices situated in the physical locale set up the parameters within which people live their lives and imagine their futures. Social representations do not exist independently of each other. They form interrelated and overlapping networks that contain complex systems of meanings. The following chapter demonstrates how these systems of meaning are understood over time.

Chapter 6: The Structure of Social Representations in Abertillery

6.1 Social Representations and change in Abertillery

Social representations theory acknowledges that people can become displaced as they experience ruptures in their lives, and that there is a need for them to actively reposition themselves in order to maintain a sense of continuity (e.g. Duveen, 1997, 2001). Ruptures can stem from various sources; they can be a consequence of change within the socio-cultural context, such as the loss of a traditional way of life within a community, or a result of transformations within a person's sphere of experience, such as loss of employment. Transformations to meaningful relationships and social networks can also be a source of rupture. The Abertillery community has experienced a traumatic breach in the fabric of its life due to the dramatic removal of the industrial base in the South Wales valleys. As the collieries have closed, shutting out the local workforce, much that has been familiar and known to older inhabitants - physical structures and landmarks, established social roles, practices and relationships - have been eliminated, modified or threatened, weakening the once solid foundation of the community. While the miners suffered great personal trauma at the demise of their participation in the coal industry, the community living in Abertillery during that time experienced an extreme sense of loss, disorientation and uncertainty for the future.

In such times of rupture, people must undertake psychological work to deal with the unfamiliar (Moscovici, 1984), and as a result of the rupture in Abertillery, this has been necessary to enable community members to make the essential adjustments that will allow them to successfully make 'a transition from one socio-cultural formation to another' (Zittoun et al., 2003). Faced with a fracture in the continuity of their experience, local inhabitants have been required to seek the means to maintain a sense of continuity for both themselves and the community from within their physical environment and their 'personal culture' (Valsiner, 1998). Social representations circulating within a locale provide the symbolic

material from which people attempt to imagine themselves and their communities forward. They possess features that provide what Gee (2005) has called a 'social semiotic space'; a symbolic space within which a sign system sets the parameters that constrain what can be thought to what can be thinkable (Wagner and Hayes, 2005). The availability of social representations, such as those of mining and of men's and women's work, restricts use of symbolic elements located within the environment by different groups within the community, and channels the ways in which both individuals and groups are able to make sense of their lives; their environment, thoughts, values, practices and identities.

The following chapter recognizes the ways in which three generations of men and women have used those social representations available in their locale differentially to make sense of their environment and their lives over time. The need to make sense was important to each generation, although different generations were positioned differently with respect to the mining industry and therefore used the social representations anchored in the mining industry in very different ways. Their spontaneous use of social representations provides insight into the social representations that have been, and are salient for groups across space and time, and also highlights the changing relationships between the stable core of a social representation and changing peripheral elements (Abric, 1993), and how these changes have, and are supporting different systems of thought within a single community. The core is interpreted here as those notions anchored in the mining industry, while the periphery carries the cultural legacies that remain related to mining, yet in a less direct way. Gee's (2005) notions of portals, through which people may or may not be granted access to interact with signs corresponds with the availability of opportunities to gain specific embodied knowledge and experience; knowledge and experience that is both formed by and serves to preserve specific social representations. The older generation of Abertillery community members have been granted access to experiences - events, objects and people - that have become unavailable to subsequent generations. The miners have shared experiences and understandings that those remaining above ground can only imagine.

The themes that emerged in chapter 4 allowed the mapping of social representations in Abertillery. The themes related to place, the natural and man-made topographical features of the locale. Interviews with the three generations provided a temporal dimension with a focus on people's accounts of education and work. The trajectories of three generations illuminated how the shifting economic and social conditions were experienced differently across time. People living in Abertillery experienced the locale at different points in its history and were therefore positioned differently with regard to closure/rupture. This made different aspects of the available social representations salient for groups in different ways. During the past forty years the extreme shifts in the economic and social base in Abertillery have rendered traditional practices related to mining irrelevant and have shifted many long-accepted social roles. These changes have made unavailable many of the material resources, values, beliefs and activities that have supported life in the locale. As the physical landscape and traditional practices of Abertillery have been transformed over time, so the availability of social representations (N.B. symbolic resources refer to individuals, social representations to the collective) within the locale has altered. The changing cultural field has facilitated very different patterns of appropriation of social representations for groups of people within the Abertillery community. Community members born into different generations experience markedly different physical and social worlds, and have available to them very different networks of social representations. However, as Jodelet (1991) illustrated, social representations carry historical legacies that have a depth beyond the notion of a series of themes, a depth formed by the past practices and values of the community based on what was symbolically important to the community. Therefore we can view social representations that circulate in the community today as remaining connected to the past.

Although social representations can endure across time for those for whom they have been particularly salient, the availability and meanings of these for different age groups within the community will differ, and this differential appropriation of social representations supports very different ways of thinking, and can feed back into the community to modify the value of once dominant social representations. Ideas that were highly valued by a past generation can become less so for a

younger generation for whom the practices of mining are no longer available or useful. Indeed a specific social representation that has underpinned the lives of older people might not be available to the younger community members.

Therefore the social representations available to the older generation gradually become transformed according to the new functional necessities of succeeding generations. Even so, vestiges of the past remain and, although transformed, can be found in young people's accounts of life in the community. New technologies play a particularly dominant role in the lives and projected futures of many younger people. In this new socio-cultural context older community members may continue to appropriate long-standing social representations in the absence of associated past practices and material artefacts, but may modify their use to make sense of the trauma of economic, social and physical transformations they have experienced, or are still experiencing.

The social representations of the community were called upon and used by individuals in personal ways provided during their accounts of education and work. Within what Gee (2005) refers to as a social semiotic space, men and women of different generations call upon available social representations differentially to make sense and project themselves into the future. When a social representation is used in such an individual way it becomes a 'symbolic resource' (Zittoun et al., 2003), operating as part of a person's individual symbolic system of meaning to construct coherence by making sense of the past and present, and thus support the ability of individuals to project a future.

Wagner and Hayes (2005) have suggested that dominant social representations can be thought about in terms of metaphors, consisting of a central core and a periphery. In this study the core relates to ideas that were anchored in mining when it was an active, productive and highly valued practice; it is based in an historical period that existed before the rupture.

6.2 Dominant metaphors

6.2.1. *The Body*

The metaphor of ‘the body’ draws together symbolic elements that are associated with men’s physical labour, and is used to represent the health of the community itself. At the core of this social representation is the active body, the miners’ body, and this contains notions of health, fitness, ability, productivity and drive, attributes that co-existed with power and recognition in the Abertillery locale. The healthy male body of the miner has become a metaphor for the resilience, power and momentum of the locale and its community; the physical strength and labour of miner’s bodies constructed a powerful federation of men, which supported a strong and healthy community. Juxtaposed with the ‘healthy’ body at the core of the social representation are notions of the ‘broken’ body; a body that has been damaged through illness or injury, suffered a reduction in power, and that can no longer fulfil its required work function. Just as such a body had no purpose in the mines, so this once productive and renowned community has lost its function, sense of purpose and sense of identity through the loss of the coal industry. Both the declining town landscape and the community itself show signs of the damage inflicted by the loss of mining. Also associated with the healthy, able body, and key to this social representation is ‘the mind’ and its opposition to ‘the body’. With the healthy body a metaphor for a flourishing community, the mind becomes largely redundant, with the healthy, fit, employed body limiting the requirement for a trained, educated mind. Thus ‘work of the mind’ occupies a distinct, but non-central position until the body is broken and an alternative is sought.

6.2.2. *Above and Below*

Orientation metaphors are commonly applied to states of mind, with ‘up’ carrying the positive connotations (Wagner and Hayes, 2005). However, here the metaphor ‘above and below’ has been used differently, ‘above’ and ‘below’

represent two distinct worlds within the Abertillery locale, the world below the source of power, the other dependent upon it. At the core of this social representation are the mines themselves located deep under the ground, from which emanates physicality, masculinity, productivity and labour, effort that produces the driving power of the locale and constructs the solid foundation upon which the community has been built. The world below ground has been built by men and is home to an elite community of men who share values and purpose. 'Below' is where men's bodies engage in important work, the work that defines and supports the locale and provides mining men with recognition and status. Also at the core are notions relating to the world 'above', the surface terrain of Abertillery, where non-miners remain. 'Above' is where support roles are played out and where the strong body is less crucial to daily life. 'Above' is where education also resides; largely irrelevant below ground it has established its place above. Specifically, the participants' accounts revealed the schemas 'below ground', 'above ground' and 'an elevated world' that locate the concepts of 'the body', 'the hands' and 'the mind' within space and time.

6.2.3. Dirt and Cleanliness

The metaphor 'dirt and cleanliness' is related to both 'the body' and 'above and below', and powerfully symbolises the ways that masculinity and femininity have been understood and lived in Abertillery. The core of this social representation is formed by the dirty work of miners and their practice before the installation of pithead baths of returning home covered in coal dust, a routine that necessitates the responsibility of women for maintaining cleanliness. Though these activities are juxtaposed and interdependent at the core of the social representation, it is the men's mining activities that underpin these practices and support distinct social roles. 'Dirt and cleanliness' carries a range of essential notions; physical, strenuous, sweaty masculine labour related to the production of valued coal, dirty work that is undertaken by men. This contrasts starkly with the less productive, repetitive domestic duties of women in the home.

6.2.4. *Threat*

'Threat' emerges as a powerful metaphor through the risk of danger that miners experienced on a daily basis. Anchored at the core of this social representation is the miner's experiences of accidents in the tunnels below, and in the stories that circulate regarding the possible danger miners face on a daily basis; the ubiquitous monster that resides in the tunnels of the mines. Threat is 'known' and watched for, and miners are constantly prepared to deal with it. Underground they make jokes about possible dangers as a sign of masculinity, bravery, and membership. Also contained within this metaphor is threat of a very different kind. This threat has not been 'known' by generations of miners; it is unfamiliar, unexpected and the miners of Abertillery were not prepared to withstand it. It is mass redundancy, and it causes the traumatic rupture that permanently transforms the locale, along with the lives of the men and women who live there.

6.2.5. *Landscape*

The metaphor of 'landscape' is firmly anchored in the specific topographical features of the Abertillery locale. Abertillery stands in a particularly narrow section of the valley set within steep mountains covered with dark fir trees. Mountains curtail the view in any direction; those nearby directly enclose the community while others present a more distant barrier to a wider world. The town itself is a combination of old and new; old housing and small shops share space with new larger buildings – a supermarket, sports centre, secondary school and primary school. Then there are the relatively new open spaces. Grassy fields that were once the sites of the collieries sit alongside newly built enterprises including a business park and an industrial estate - signs of hope and expectation built on top of the dreams of miners and their families, eclipsing their futures.

While the activity of mining has constructed and defined the local community, it was the coal-rich land that created the communities and the symbolic worlds anchored within them, and without its support the community that rested upon the bedrock of the mine cannot be preserved. It was buried as the mines were filled in

and building work began above, changing the landscape forever. For older generations however, each new development, each step towards regeneration is a reminder of what has been replaced and how much has been lost. For the topography to be renewed and freshened, for the beauty of the landscape to come into focus, old and valued ways of life have been compromised:

“Cwmtillery Industrial Estate, if you were standing on the estate, you were standing above the house I grew up in. It was all filled in, buried, the valley as well as the mine.”

(Malcolm, older generation, Abertillery)

Economic and social transitions can imbue places with new meanings that impact deeply upon many of the beliefs, values and behaviours of the inhabitants of affected communities, and it is the physical space in which community members reside that carries the shared meanings from which they will draw in order to make sense of the changes they are experiencing. All knowledge is considered and tested against the background of prior, cultural knowledge and expectation (Moscovici, 1984), and physical experience of geographical and social space is key to how meanings are constructed, maintained or modified. How spaces within a community are used, and who by, what meanings spaces and their related practices carry, along with the salience of these social representations for different groups within a community underpin both the character of a community and the availability of cultural resources in the event of dramatic change. The closure of the Abertillery coal mines, including the physical filling-in of a large part of the valley itself served to wipe away much evidence of a long-standing way of life. This left a landscape unrecognisable to many older community members, a landscape which, while contributing to the ambiguity of the transition from industrial to post-industrial community, was also the source from which residents must locate and appropriate the social representations that would enable them to make sense of the changes and steer a trajectory through the uncertainty.

The metaphor of ‘landscape’ pulls together a range of notions relating to masculinity and femininity, community, opportunity, and physical and psychological borders. The core of this social representation is embedded in the topographical features of the locale – the deep narrow valley below which were

rich coal seams determining the location of a number of highly productive collieries, along with the relative isolation that resulted from relatively poor transport links. The mines were extremely salient, attacking the senses, and producing characteristic objects and practices, and also supported specific practices and social positions both below and above ground that guided the ways in which people within these communities have been able to make sense of their world. The Abertillery landscape has come to represent so much more than mere geography; it carries the past, holds the present, and offers a future for the resident community.

6.3 Change over time

As prior patterns of social life are jeopardised, the community no longer shares long-held meanings; objects and practices are lost with the passing of time, and there is no longer a dominant and definitive shared action that is the social origin of ideas and knowledge for community members. Habitual culture-specific patterns of thinking and acting (Farr, 1987a) have been interrupted, and in their place is a newly evolving cultural system, within which a host of contradictory ideas will be circulating (Moscovici, 1992). In times of change communities use symbolic coping strategies, and it is this 'discursive performance' (Wagner, 1998, in Valsiner and Rosa, 2007, p.49) that allows social representations to be maintained or modified. Different generations will thus have very different emergent social representations available to them. Not only has the physical space of Abertillery changed extensively, but the content and salience of social representations of mining have also changed considerably over time. While some have lived 'mining' and struggle to cope with its loss, subsequent generations have no physical, sensory experience of a working mining community; no sights, sounds or smells to signify a traditional and proud society.

6.3.1 The older generation

For the older generation, ‘the body’, particularly the miner’s body was an extremely salient notion, and came to symbolise the strength of the community. The accounts suggest that while the economy was flourishing, the presence of the mining workforce pulled the community together and that, with the demise of the coal industry, this symbol of strength and power has faded over time. The ex-miners that once provided the youth and vitality of Abertillery have aged, and ‘the body’ provides a powerful metaphor for the community in terms of the physical strength of much of the community, a strength that supported and drove life in Abertillery, along with the later weakening of this once powerful body of men through the breaking of the solidarity of local neighbourhoods.

6.3.1.1 Nerves, sinews and guts

“There was one coalface, ‘W’, it was. I think it was five miles from pit bottom, and so you had all the things regarding the district. You’d have the haulages and, seventy-five horsepower haulage, and they’re all going down taking the trams in stages in the district. They go down to a transfer point, where the belt, the last belt would bring the coal out then. You could have as many as five belts, going into the face to bring the coal out, and then you had the tail road which was the other road going in. That’s where they took the supplies in.”

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

The valley floor stands high above the tunnels of a vast colliery, above a symbolic order formed by the labour of men’s bodies; a world that was distinct from life above ground, but in which life above ground was rooted. In this immense, dark world the work was dirty, noisy, arduous and dangerous, demanding strong, hard bodies whose purpose was to produce vast amounts of coal from the ground. Prior to the 1960s, there were no mechanised tools to ease the extraction of the coal, and it was muscle, sinew and tendon that bore the strain of digging at the coalface with picks and shovels. Men entering this subterranean world became miners through physical experience, committing to a brotherhood that takes pride in production, and pride in the power and ability of their own bodies:

“When I went underground, you get twelve yards of coal off...you know what I mean? And that’s a lot of coal to work...a lot of coal. But I tell you within a fortnight I was as fit as a butcher’s dog.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

In these tunnels physical health and strength was the currency and anyone lacking these could not easily become a legitimate member of this community; physical weakness was incompatible with the demand for high levels of coal production. Associated with productivity were the shape, sturdiness and colour of the male body, with its hard muscles and covering of ingrained black coal dust. It was these bodies that laboured below ground, these that dug the coal from the earth, and these that demanded the recognition and respect of those above ground when they returned to the surface following a shift. But these men produced more than coal; they produced themselves through the dirt and sweat that coated their bodies, and carried this up to the world outside, where the pride and values they embodied served to establish the order of community life.

The men of this generation recognised and used a social representation of the strong, hard miner’s body and its labour within a harsh underground environment to demand recognition of the contribution and status of men, to affirm a social order based on hegemonic masculinity, in which men performed the valued practices that supported and protected the community. Although this social order was based upon mining practices and the miner’s body, patterns of gendered work were established and maintained throughout the community above ground. Abertillery is situated within a strongly working class region that has relied heavily on manual employment, and the miners epitomised the source of masculine power in the Abertillery locale.

Their bodies were stronger and harder than most of those above ground, but the hazardous and brutal environment in which the miners worked was a constant reminder of their physical vulnerability. The protection of bodies working underground was paramount; danger waited in the shadows and behind the walls and roofs of the tunnels and it was the responsibility of each and every mineworker to be vigilant, to protect themselves and their companions:

“We knew that the conditions we were working in, this could happen. So we was very, very careful. So we was looking out for each other. So the men, I was working with different men, dragged you out from there..... When we was working in that type of condition, you would always keep a look out for each other., you know what I mean? We wouldn’t be too far from each other...you’d always, like work in pairs, or work in a bunch. You always looked out for each other and it was, it was very very, like that you know? You was paired off in, in butties. You would, umm, you’d always, people in the next dent would always look out for you, and you would look out for them. Very close, very close. It was like your next-door neighbour, with the door open.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

Danger was a constant, and was recognised and feared, but this was no place for weakness; the coal had to be pulled out and men had to do this work:

“They were replacing the cables in the, uh, district that the explosion was, and as you were going down in there, there was only two of us going down, the men on pit bottom said ‘Where’re you going?’, ‘Oh we’re going to ‘W twenty’’, ‘Oh, well don’t come out of there with red hair then will you?’, ‘cause of the pigment of the skin with carbon monoxide. So we just gave them funny looks like. Well, as you were going down into the district you could see the cables were charred from the explosion, the old cables were charred, and the further in that you got, I said to the electrician, ‘What are those chalk marks and numbers and rings?’ He said ‘That’s where the bodies were found’. When we came out of the pit we told them to send men down to rub ‘em all off, like.”

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

Danger was resisted with watchfulness and care but also with humour, and reflecting the extreme levels of often unavoidable risk-taking were the ways in which men may acceptably express humour below ground. Jokes and pranks were expressions of personal resilience, and were a test or acknowledgement of that of other miners; tricks of this kind would not be played out above ground. The cheerfulness of miner’s humour countered the peril and tragedy inherent in the environment, but at the same time recognized and reinforced these. While it released tension it also drew men together in renewed acknowledgement of both the seriousness of the bodily risks they undertook and the fear that lay beneath the surface for each man:

“All of a sudden there was an almighty bang, the ground underneath me rose up. Stones and dust come out of the, and hit me on the head...[laughs]...out of the roof, and I was up and running, pretty good, and he was running after me, the electrician, he eventually caught up with me and brought me down with a rugby tackle, and he said, he was laughing his head off, he said, ‘They told me they were going to shot fire under the air bridge’ and he said, ‘I didn’t tell you ‘cause I wanted to see your reaction’ and he said ‘You can’t outrun an explosion...but you had a good try.’

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

The practice of initiating younger apprentices through a ritual entailing a perceived risk of physical injury was common and was enjoyed by those familiar with life underground. However, the practical jokes often carried a serious message for the inexperienced mineworker, and could be used to teach these men the routines of mines, along with safe and unsafe practices.

The introduction of specialised machinery changed life underground. Air bridges and gas testing monitors promoted an improved sense of control in the mines, while roof masters and disc cutters improved production, renewing the miner’s sense of mastery and purpose. However, the body remained at the centre of this world; bodies operated the machinery and bodies could be saved by it, bodies still needed to be strong and fit and they still got dirty. The competition between the bodies of men and the mass of coal and rock that was the coalface took on a new aspect:

“You didn’t have to use the shovel so much. It was quicker. You was cutting off more coal because you had the disc-cutter cutting it and you was going in there quicker and quicker.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

This significant increase in coal output served to further reinforce the order above ground, strengthening the recognition the men received from the surface community, underpinning the hierarchy in which mining dominated. Men’s jobs above ground were positioned by mining, with jobs relating to the collieries placed higher in the hierarchy of employment.

Abertillery men recognised social representations of danger and the body, but the ways in which different individuals used them depended upon physical experiences of the mines. Miners used social representations of danger in a specific way, as something familiar to be dealt with on a daily basis to affirm their membership of a brave and proud organization. Entry to the hazardous environment of the mines was conferred upon physically and mentally strong men, so to be a miner was confirmation of the achievement of a masculine ideal:

“I was outside because I was shaken up [*following involvement in a mining accident*], but the next day I went back in.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

In contrast, social representations of danger emerged in the accounts of men who did not descend the mine shafts, but in these cases threats to health and well being were appropriated in order to justify choices of alternative employment:

“My father, God bless him, decided that I was not going to go in the colliery, it was such a hard life.”

(Ron, older generation, Abertillery)

6.3.1.2. *Education*

In that prior world, in which bodily labour had reigned, education could not compete. It could not offer opposition to an order with such deep and wide foundations stretching far below the landscape and supporting life above. Mining had constructed an order so strongly demarcated that education was relegated to a periphery that was all but invisible to the community. The school building was a tangible, knowable presence, but the world within it remained unknowable and remote. The adult realm of work offered a membership so relevant and legitimate that disallowed the presence of an alternative world, directing both eye and mind away from education:

“I remember being in school, and I’d be sat there and the teacher’d be talking about whatever the case may be, and I’d look out and perhaps

there'd be somebody, mending his wheel, and I'd be mesmerised and I'd be so interested in this guy mending his wheel on the car, or perhaps somebody painting a window, I wouldn't have any, interest at all in the actual lesson."

(Malcolm, older generation, Abertillery)

"We all said 'Oh that's for us', 'cause it, it was lovely, and we couldn't wait to leave school then and go down the pit. Because, at that time, that's where the money was, you know what I mean? You didn't need qualifications. You did not need 'em."

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

The hiatus in community life caused by the demands of education was a negative in the lives of many community members; a hindrance at best, it was a damaging experience for many working class boys:

"Looking back it was absolutely, it was a total, utter and total waste of time, my time going there really you know. I didn't even, I didn't gain anything from it. I can remember, uh, um, never ever being encouraged by any of the teachers. They would always give you something to do, and they would always point at the negative, all negatives init, you know? And I didn't realise then what it was they were doing. I realised, I, I, in them days I used to think how dreadful they was. I now know, I now know looking back how, how, how wrong they was and how, really, there's none of them, could ever see the potential in me."

(Malcolm, older generation, Abertillery)

"They give you free feeding [free school meals], but, free feeders, you were marked down in the class. I don't think they're allowed to do that now but they used, it used to be marked that you were free feeders. When you went to the, dinner, free feeders were on a separate table. No matter how old you were, the little ones were with the big ones, all the ones that was having free feeding."

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

In contrast to the meaningful activity in the world below, the currency within the school was unrecognisable and unavailable, the language incomprehensible, presenting an unwelcoming and purposeless world. The community had few expectations of the time children spent in a sanitary world detached from an

established order based on dirt, sweat and blood. This order formed by the labour of men's bodies below ground prevailed, invading the physical space of the school to further drive education into the shadows and out of the minds of young people. Boys in school found meaning in surface activities that paralleled those in the mines below; bodily activities in which success required strong, hard and resilient muscles, sinews and nerves:

"If you went to Gelli Crug, it would be tough you know. We would, like, fight and play rugby and all that type of thing you know what I mean?"

(Malcolm, older generation, Abertillery)

"So I end up as the captain of the rugby team, which was undoubtedly the most important post in the school, to be captain of rugby because it was, they say everybody knows it as a rugby hot bed. So that was a tremendous achievement, I was also the vice captain of the cricket side."

(Ron, older generation, Abertillery)

"He [teacher] said 'You'll play the way I want. You'll do what *I* want you to do'. So we went up, but instead of playing handball we started playing rugby. So he came up the steps, and he saw we were playing rugby and he said '*I told you*, you were to play handball', and because we were playing rugby, we all had the cane."

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

The salient social representations for men and boys were those of the body as the source of power and respect. The metaphor of 'the body' serves to contain a range of positive elements of masculinity; it was the strong, fit male body that laboured to construct and sustain the community, and that maintained the social order and justified non-participation within the school. The emerging orientation metaphor 'below' carries notions of reward, promise and respect; it was the practices undertaken 'below' that held status and power and that confirmed a sense of masculinity for those able to access that environment. These metaphors acknowledge the maintenance of a social representation of the school as unnecessary and 'other', which enabled boys passing through the compulsory education system to experience relatively little desire or need to invest.

These young men had recognised, as schoolchildren the requirements of masculinity within the community: hard, muscular body; steady nerves; resilience; and productivity in a sphere that contributed to the standing of the community. They were already preparing through their investment in their bodies to enter an adult community for which education was absent and work governed all. This investment allowed them access to the type of work that defined the community, and would define them as legitimate and valued community members. This work was the strenuous, dirty and hazardous labour of heavy industry. Existing on a different stratum to the elevated world of education, it lay on the bedrock of the mines.

6.3.1.3 From soot-covered to spotless

“My mam used to scrub my.....he used to sit in the tin bath in the kitchen, my dad used to sit there and, and my mam used to scrub the black off his back, the coal dust, it was ingrained.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

The home of the miner was a world rooted in the symbolic order formed by the labour of men's bodies far beneath the community, but one that was distinct from that dark world of dirt and sweat. Life on the surface was light and open, and it was here that women were responding to the demands of the community. Women also recognised social representations of the body, but used these differently to establish and affirm their own positions within the social order of the locale, a social order that was necessary for the community to be sustained. Women used social representations of the valued labouring masculine body to validate their own investment as co-contributors, as supporters of the men and the defining local industry. Women's roles were the antithesis of the men's; they belonged above ground, their bodies were softer and weaker, and were not productive in the way that men's bodies could be. A woman's badge of honour was a clean and tidy home, rather than a dirty, sweaty body, and it was to this home that the miner returned to wash away the dirt of the mine on his return to the surface world. The feminine, domestic world was a relational one, a world that complemented and helped define the masculine order:

“A woman’s place is at home, and that was the attitude of a lot of men, mind. My husband didn’t want me to work, not really. He didn’t want me to go back to work after the children, mind.”

(Mary, older generation, Abertillery)

“ I got married at the age of twenty, and that was the end of that. I knew nothing else. I just got on with it.”

(Hazel, older generation, Abertillery)

Here hygiene was the valid currency. While men used social representations of dirt in terms of coverings of valued coal dust to establish their credentials, so women drew upon notions of cleanliness to assert their vital supporting role in the social order. The metaphor of dirt and cleanliness presents both male and female roles as essential, each reliant on the other, and carries a range of powerful notions regarding men and women, including gendered practices, social spaces and abilities. The domestic world did not invoke the hazards and brutality of the mines; instead the danger was in the dirt from the mine that threatened the home, and the power to maintain cleanliness was respected. The work of the miner forged and maintained the symbolic order, but while the coal dust on a miner’s body signified recognition and respect, it could not be allowed to invade the home. While mineworkers were joining a brotherhood below ground that was united in production, women in the community were forming a sisterhood that was equally powerful, and dedicated to controlling the pollution stemming from the mines.

The social hierarchy determined that high status paid employment was the domain of the men; it was their bodies that toiled for money, it was their responsibility to provide for their families. Housework and childrearing were expected of women. However, some had to undertake paid employment, and the jobs that women were taking up reflected the ways that they were producing themselves in complementary opposition to the men. While men carried their bodies and skills downwards, under the earth, employed women were remaining above ground, carrying their domestic skills across the boundary of the home, to places of work where they continued to clean, sew and cook:

“I clean, basically.”

(Ellen, older generation, Abertillery)

“I was a sewing machinist. I can make anything. Clothes, anything for the home. My grandmother and mother sewed, and my grandmother taught me everything. I was always going to be a sewing machinist.”

(Jean, older generation, Abertillery)

“I worked in the care home just down here [points] for years till I retired, and I loved it. But you know, apart from that, it helps the income doesn't it? Helps, you know.”

(Mary, older generation, Abertillery)

The symbolic work that these women undertook involved the appropriation of social representations of ‘women’s work’ as domestic and secondary to that of local men; the women used these to recognise sewing, cleaning and cooking as proud female traditions, passed down through generations. However, while these social representations also imposed restrictions upon women regarding career trajectories and education pathways, the value placed upon the supporting roles of women in the Abertillery locale served to justify their limited expectations through the rewards of homemaking and childrearing. In this feminine world in which cleanliness prevailed, the sanitised world of the school nonetheless remained a blank, undefined space, scrubbed away by the generations of women for whom cleaning had been the imperative. Education remained meaningless to many young girls for whom pride was found in the successful performance of routine household tasks and the maintenance of relationships expected of women. The community hierarchy had been strongly established, and in these streets it was the ability to maintain a clean and comfortable home, and raise a healthy and respectable family that bestowed legitimate membership for women. Within such a system education was absent; for young girls the school was a vacant waiting room alongside the occupied rooms of the home, where they passed time until they were able to enter these rooms and join the sorority that awaited them:

“My father was a miner. My parents didn’t say ‘You’ve got to finish school’. I had no encouragement to stay on in school. I wanted to get out as quick as I can. I was courting. I wanted to get on”

(Hazel, older generation, Abertillery)

6.3.1.4 *When the routes underground are blocked, the community above loses its way*

As each mine closed a wave of loss and disorientation was sent out across the locale, affecting generations of community members. At times of trauma individuals and communities must undertake new symbolic work in order to re-establish a sense of coherence (Moscovici, 1984; Zittoun et al, 2003). In the absence of the once dominant social order based upon mining, it was essential for the Abertillery community to seek new means by which they could undertake the symbolic work necessary to cope with the devastation caused by the rupture. For the older generation, for whom the coal industry had been a constant, the physical and psychological move to the world they now encountered continued to be understood through social representations related to the past.

During the 1970s and 1980s, as the local collieries were closed one by one, life and landscape were dramatically altered for those living in the Abertillery community:

“We used to go walking. We went all around, looking at different colliery sites, ‘cause we didn’t know where they were and..... We were saying ‘It’s bound to be here, we’re supposed to be right by it’. I said ‘Get on that mound over there. I’ll take a photograph of you’. And he’s up on the mound and I said ‘You know what that is don’t you?’ and he said ‘What?’ and I said ‘That’s the capping they put on top of the shaft’.”

(David, older generation, Abertillery)

The vast collieries remained below the surface, but by 1985 there were no labouring bodies in the tunnels below. The symbolic order resting on those bodies had been mortally wounded. The landscape was changing; one by one the routes were blocked, each shaft capped and sealed, denying miners the territory that supported community life, and as the men who belonged in the mines were expelled, the order that was held together by bodies in tunnels began to drift apart in the open landscape above. The below ground alliance had cracked and the

fissures were travelling to the surface, where they continued to rend the wider community:

“She [Thatcher] broke everybody up she did, and not, not knocking her because maybe it was her thing, but she even split the neighbours up in your own home, because nobody wouldn’t talk about anything anymore. They wouldn’t.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

The violence and confrontation that accompanied the expulsion of the miners from their jobs flowed out into the wider community, carrying people away from their familiar routines and relationships. In the aftermath, life was changed beyond recognition.

The men who were once visitors to the surface from the defining world below were now permanent residents. But they were still miners, and miners trapped above ground had no purpose. There was no productivity - no access to the product - and huge numbers of mining men looked around them for new meaning. Under the ground the machines of mining, their value unacknowledged, had been buried and forgotten, and the ‘miner’s body’, the engine of the mines, was similarly disregarded. The miner’s loss and pain manifested through the body, and the ‘broken’ guts, sinews and nerves of the miner’s body mirrored the suffering of a broken community. There were no alternative routes that could maintain the momentum of the community, and no replacement foundations strong enough to support the responsibilities miners carried for the community. The loss of the established order rocked the solid base on which the community stood, but a testament remained that had to be kept standing in order for these men and women to continue to recognise their world. Miner’s work had always provided this bedrock, and ex-miners now dug down through layers of earth, coal and rock to offer the past as a sound foundation:

“You’d have to tell ‘em. They don’t know. It’ll all be forgotten when we’re gone I suppose. That’s why I do this here [museum]. It’ll always be here.”

(Richard, older generation, Abertillery)

The metaphor of above and below powerfully conveys a range of notions relating to the expulsion of mineworkers from the mines. Mining had not been merely a job, but an identity, encompassing access to social spaces, practices, responsibilities and benefits, that was key to an entire way of life for Abertillery community members. The preservation of artefacts and the transference of written and oral histories has been undertaken in order to sustain not only knowledge and community identity, but the personal identities and trajectories of those who so heavily invested in mining.

It is through mining the industrial past that the community was maintaining some semblance of continuity, but while this was supporting the community, the coagulation of mining as the lifeblood of the community was blocking the flow of imagined futures for miners; preventing them from making the psychological transition to the above ground world. The bodily practices of miners were at the centre of the refusal to relinquish recent history, and it is miners who continued to carry the suffering, who were finding it most difficult to relocate and re-direct themselves. Although the changes were affecting all in the community, those who had never entered the mines were locating a wider range of ways to re-anchor themselves; the landscape had physically changed for all, but the destruction and covering of the territory of miners allowed for the spread of the surface territory of non-mining men. This offered a validation of the above ground order, of the value and resilience of 'surface' roles. The landscape offered no alternative resources for men and women to change the strongly gendered orders, and while the masculinity supported by the below ground order continued to sustain gendered roles, non-miners had not been planted by the community so deeply and so firmly that they could not move forward. As their social roles and many of their work roles remained, so their sense of forward trajectory prevailed. Miners, for so long the driving force of both the mines and the community, stalled, and it was the work of non-mining men that then propelled, steered and defined the community. This fissure travelling through the fabric of masculinity was a further crack in the stability of the community.

Women, so used to the routine of life in a mining community also felt the loss of the sense of purpose previously shared with the men:

“Well, the point was there was nothing else. There was nothing here now for the men to retrain. The women could do nothing about it. This is where the downfall was in these valleys. There was, there was, there was no, um, foresight into thinking about what was, with the mines closing.”

(Mary, older generation, Abertillery)

They also continued to invoke the past through the physical reminders of the engine of the community:

“Mountains and pits. That’s all we are.”

(Jean, older generation, Abertillery)

Following collective ruptures within a locale, communities need to generate new or modified forms of understanding to repair and re-construct the cohesiveness of community life, and each individual actively draws from this to re-position themselves within a new social order. However, in Abertillery particularly dominant social representations of gender roles continued to guide the older generation, limiting access to new resources that would change the gendered orders.

Like men, the women clung to gendered roles defined long ago. However, like non-mining men, women were finding a level of coherence in these roles that mining men could not. The world above ground was still providing the means for the persistence of domestic routines, changed by the presence of redundant husbands, fathers and brothers, and this was supporting the resilience that women had to traverse the breaks in community life.

This ability of those who belonged above ground to move on, and past ex-miners was a further betrayal of their value, and ex-miners protected themselves from this threat by relocating the below ground order to the surface. These men, now above ground pulled the roots of their below ground world up with them and re-planted them throughout the community. They are tending them to keep them alive by sharing memories and objects, not only with other miners who share and understand the wounds they carry but with those ‘surface dwellers’ who will listen and look. They are being drawn by the powerful pull of physical objects with

which they can engage bodily – can use or just touch – and that they can present as physical evidence of a world no longer accessible. They are doing this not only through the museum, but also through the collecting of physical paraphernalia relating to their prior usefulness:

“I collect the little discs. Every pit had a little disc with their name on. Well I do collect all of them. I got hundreds and hundreds. They’re very, very dear now. They get top prices for them. But I wouldn’t sell them. All different names on them.”

(Richard)

Also carried up from the dangerous, below ground world was the value of miners’ ability to resist threat through badinage, and the humour that sustained them in the tunnels has helped them to deal with the reality of reduced circumstances:

David:

“We were at the tram road and this big American car...and all these Americans going [imitates American accent – no words]. We were sat on the side of the mountain and we started going ‘Baa’. They was looking at us, and we said ‘Don’t worry about it...we’re redundant miners. They’ve put us out to grass’.”

Richard:

“They come here looking for Alexander Cordell and all that from the books. They come to look at where it was I expect, and uh, they were looking at us. And laugh, we laughed like hell.”

6.3.1.5 Summary

Traditional notions of masculinity in Abertillery have directly connected men to the landscape, relating men to the locale through the body, in terms of how the male body has physically worked with the land, and how men’s bodily interaction with the physical landscape has constructed societal life above ground. It is within heavy industry, particularly mining that the dominant social representations of the locale have been anchored. Women of the older generation, although distanced from the heavy bodily labour involved with mining and metal working

have nonetheless resided in a world inextricably connected to heavy industry. They have relied upon deeply held hegemonic social representations of men and women's roles to understand their own positionings and opportunities. Although social representations are appropriated differently by individuals and used to achieve different things, dominant social representations do set parameters for how groups can think of their world, their futures and possibilities. Men and women have appropriated available social representations in distinct ways to construct and maintain different, but deeply interdependent positionings, represented by the metaphor 'dirt and cleanliness'.

Social representations have many dimensions; they belong to the locale, formed by the community and carrying forward its history, intricately combining time, space and place. At different points in history social representations can hold diverse meanings for different individuals. However, they still possess a principal core. Abertillery is a community based on its topographical features; it is set within a narrow valley with the collieries, their entrances sealed long ago, remaining underground beneath the homes and businesses of the town. During times of collective rupture, powerful social representations based around these become particularly salient and can continue to hold a community together. Even in the absence of heavy industry, men and women in Abertillery who have experienced the locale during its mining activities have continued to appropriate social representations masculinity and femininity that stem from that period prior to the rupture.

Both men and women of the older generation remain strongly connected to the mining era, and they continue to draw upon longstanding social representations to maintain a sense of coherence and pride. The dominance of manual labour related to heavy industry positioned men and women into a complementary arrangement that has provided the older generation with clear and powerful ways of making sense of their lives. Thus social representations that have emerged from shifts towards both cleaner, less physical men's work and education are resisted; men and women of this generation cannot relinquish the codes laid down by mining, as without these they risk losing the past, and without the past they cannot locate themselves in the present and cannot imagine a future.

While the loss of mining did not affect men and women in the same ways, both are equally reliant upon social representations of local masculine traditions as the pinnacle of achievement and status. Following redundancy men experienced a dramatic and damaging sense of loss and rejection, and many continue to appropriate social representations of mining to maintain a connection with practices that confer status and worth. While initially losing their way along with the men, women were able to locate a new sense of purpose, to support the family and maintain continuity through unwavering engagement with feminine roles. However, regardless of such work in the home and in the workplace, women of this generation remain unable to speak of female roles as central to the community; they continue to draw upon a persistent social representation of men's practices as definitive and they juxtapose their positions with a stronger male role that no longer exists.

6.3.2 The middle generation

In the aftermath of the colliery closures, the middle generation appropriated traditional social representations in very different ways to the older men and women. The employment opportunities for men that had previously underpinned social representations of gendered roles were rendered unavailable, however, social representations of physicality, dirt and cleanliness persisted. Men of this subsequent generation were required to project futures previously not considered, and they managed the rupture through differential appropriation of notions of the body; for these men physical, dirty work was no longer desirable, the body was no longer the power behind the community. The trauma is less immediate for many women however,. The need for domesticity has prevailed, allowing women the space in which to imagine their futures.

6.3.2.1 Its roots pushed out of the ground, the family tree shakes

“It’s a steady job, safe. They’re not likely to close a library down. It’s a full-time branch.”

(Alex)

The clean and quiet room in the library is an environment far removed in both distance and sensory experience from the now defunct mines. However, this marked difference belies the dissolving of boundaries between above and below. During the 1970s and 80s the mines became silent, but they continued to shout their demands to an ensuing generation that could find no way to answer them; could find no access to that world. As the mineshafts were filled, the anchor that for so long was embedded in the bedrock of the mine came adrift, damaging expectations of strongly defined futures. While ex-miners delved deeply to re-embed the mainstay of their world, the middle generation, with no means to enter that world, experienced a tension that challenged them to re-anchor their lives within a destabilized above ground order.

In this new order, dirty manual labour occupied a distinct place between the older men and the next generation, but while the view facing the ex-miners was clear, vibrant and compelling, that available to the middle generation was faded, indistinct and irrelevant, and to see a meaningful image they directed their gaze elsewhere. It is in this shifting symbolic order, de-anchored from the bedrock of the industrial base, that sons and nephews had to forge their futures. They were pulled one way by a persisting world that demanded a masculinity based not only on strong bodies and the ability to fulfil strongly gendered roles, but also on a social order that privileged mining, and they were pulled in another direction by a changing world that required men to find and retain employment in an arena that prioritised work that was not for men alone, that did not require a powerful body.

While the old order once supported the community from below, these sons and nephews carried that past world on their shoulders, a constant weight of comparison upon a generation of men who could not carry on proud traditions

through their bodies, who could not be the men their fathers were. Older men and women were continuing to breathe life into a past world of sweat and strength that had meaning for them, that defined them, but this served as an immutable reminder that little the subsequent generation could do could equal the status that heavy industry endowed upon the community and its members. Its replacement was a weakened world of manufacturing and administration roles, a world that was transportable, that did not burrow into the ground to extract coal and embed deep roots in the bedrock. This was not a world from which the community could find security, and men who had to represent this world were resentful. There were no opportunities for the working, productive and highly valued body, and the employment that was offered to these younger men bestowed positions that older men could not validate. This newer generation were caught between two opposing orders; to either strive to find a way to embody the old order, an endeavour likely to fail and betray their own futures, or to betray that world and those who depended on it by attempting to bring an alternative and contradictory order into focus.

These men recognised the powerful social representations of mining as hard and physical work for men, but also as work that had been dangerous and that had not provided stability. They used these social representations both to justify their inability to follow in the footsteps of prior generations of miners, and also to present mining as undesirable and exploitative:

“I was always good at technical drawing, and I loved it, wanted to be an architect from, oh, very early on. There was no mining, no jobs in the mines then. But I wouldn’t have done that anyway. I hope not anyway.”

(Sam, middle generation, Abertillery)

“I lived opposite Cwmtillery pits. It wasn’t like that [mosaic]. It was not pretty, you know what I mean? I...that world was a world of exploitation. I don’t want to relate to it.”

(Jeremy, middle generation, Abertillery)

At this time, some young men were recognising and attempting to answer the pull of traditional masculinity through their investment in mechanical work, work that

could offer a level of danger, dirt and noise. But even this increased investment was still failing to align itself with the traditional masculinity that defined the below ground order; a mechanic in the tunnels was part of a cohesive, well-defined and demarcated world, while the 'new' mechanics could not reproduce this above ground. There was no sense of the unity forged through bodily labour in a shared exclusive environment, and the oil and grime on the car mechanic's body carried none of the kudos of the mineworker if it is not mixed with coal dust.

Some men were choosing to escape this new destabilized world, but their routes outward were driven by that sense of masculinity forged by the below ground world; a world in which physical endurance was the trial, and in which membership and value were bestowed by the wearing of a 'uniform' of coal dust:

"It [army training] was, harsh, really harsh..... So, after your six weeks your red tab goes and they give you your uniform. So then you feel, worth something then."

(Peter)

These men were directly acknowledging social representations of the body as a means to achieve recognition and respect, and had found a way to achieve this above ground. However, this entailed leaving the geographical space of the locale, the surface world that represented a dependent, supporting and less masculine role.

The tensions created by the weakening roots of the old order were allowing education to grow and spread its branches across the above ground world. The faded defences offered by mining could no longer outshine the school, and they were becoming overshadowed. In a world where 'dirty work' had been reduced in value, education was no longer absent, however, neither was it yet vibrant and clear. It remained elusive and difficult to recognise, residing higher than many community members, used to focusing on the world below ground, could lift their eyes, and for many of those middle generation members who were able to acknowledge its presence, reaching beyond the lowest levels remained too challenging. To bring education into full view and within reach required they

must leave their familiar plane and enter the world of the school. However, all that they had known told them that this was 'other'; something to be respected, but something that remained out of reach, and that did not welcome them:

"I think they teach, irrelevant things in junior school. Out of touch, like."

(Howard)

Although not directly involved in the bodily labour that once dominated, men of the middle generation were nonetheless appropriating notions of physicality and practicality to assert their disconnection from education. For them, education must still serve a purpose that is useful within the locale, a purpose that enables a community member to fulfil their work or social role.

As education came more into focus, so fathers faded out of the picture. As the eyes of the next generation gazed up towards education they turned from these older men who remained entrenched in a world far removed from the school. The older generation of men were so firmly embedded below ground that to reach up to embrace education in order to encourage their children they would have had to let go of the anchor that stabilises them. This was beyond their abilities, they had lived outside that world for too long. In order to look elsewhere for their futures, the middle generation of men were forced to dismiss their father's world.

Nonetheless qualifications were the latest, albeit foreign currency, and it was mothers who directed the gaze of their children, mothers who were aware of some possible usefulness of these branches to a new generation:

"My mum used to say 'If you don't go to school you won't get no qualifications and won't get a job', you know and that's it. It was up to me, she wasn't forcing me, but I still had to pay her board and lodge when I left school no matter what I did. It's just the way of the world. I, it's just the way that society leads you and you just fall into it and you just say yes, to a cushy office job."

(Howard)

“My mother was the more supportive with schoolwork, as far as she could be. My father was a typical miner, a strong man, a man’s man - and I was never going to be like him. He didn’t have time for literature, or poetry, or music, everything that I enjoyed, that I related to.”

(Jeremy)

However, these mothers were the same women for whom education was meaningless, absent, and while they could direct the gaze of their children, they, like the older men could not accompany their children into a world that meant nothing for them. They could merely point the way and let their children attempt the climb alone.

Some men did look up and do recognise that this alternative world has value, that it may be an alternative anchor in a shifting order. These men are striving to make the ascent to enter the world of education, but there was a limit to the height they could attain. These were reaching for higher education, but the unknown route through an unfamiliar world caused some to falter and return once again to the recognizable base that is their home community:

“I missed my friends. They would be out drinking and doing all the usual stuff and I’d be in Swansea. And even when I came back for weekends I didn’t have the money they had. They were all earning and buying pint after pint, while I’d run out of money early in the evening.”

(Alex - Teaching degree course)

“It was too far away. I had to give it up when the nipper was born. I couldn’t just, be away so much and leave it all to her.”

(Sam - Architecture degree course)

“I had a mental breakdown. It was the wrong place for me, the wrong decision, and I came home.”

(Jeremy - Theology degree course)

For this generation of men the school was no longer an invisible, barren and empty space, but neither was it a space in which they could find a meaningful place, even when they attempted to make the transition. Though dirty work has been de-valued and the tunnels of the mines obstructed, these men remained

burdened with the legacies of industry, the inheritance that emerged from the labour of their father's and grandfather's bodies. Nerves, sinews and guts continued to pull men away from pen and paper.

6.3.2.2 Avoiding derailment: Kept on track by domesticity

"I lived in Abertillery for eighteen months [1 mile away], then came back to Six Bells. It's a close community. You can rely on your neighbours. I look after my grandchildren now with my daughters, and they're all good kids. Some of the kids in the street walk around with no shoes and socks on. Little kids. It's dangerous. My daughters never did that, and my grandchildren don't neither. I tell them 'Go home and get some shoes on. You'll cut your feet'."

(Deborah)

For this generation the family home was a world rooted not in the symbolic order shaped by men's work below ground, but in the stability provided by the domestic, 'clean' work of women. The symbolic order above ground that once rested on traditional men's work had changed, but while the lives of many local men had been derailed, women were kept on track by domesticity, a train that could travel through the devastation without stopping. The closure of the mines changed the expectations for this generation of women, but the routines remained the same for many. While the men had been deprived of the chance of a black coat of pride, the women were maintaining a connection to the cleanliness that once complemented it. Although coal dust was no longer present, dirt was still a constant to be fought, and the clean and tidy home remained a source of purpose and pride. However, the fight was no longer against the threat of pollution brought out of the ground; instead the real challenge for women was to sustain the oasis of domestic life in the now relatively barren world left by the loss of traditional masculinity. While the masculine world that once complemented the feminine had been altered beyond recognition, women were maintaining a sense of balance and a sense of the future by continuing to create a cohesive world, based on homemaking, nurture and care:

“It was all a really relaxed environment. You had a crèche where your children could go, and then as parents, parents like you could always sit and have a coffee and a chat and just bash out day-to-day problems.”

(Juliet)

However, the boundaries between men’s work and women’s work were dissolving, and the jobs that women were taking up outside the home reflected the altered ways in which they were producing themselves. In the course of a single generation the complementary opposition of traditional masculinity and femininity that held the community together had dissipated, as both men and women sat side by side in factories. However, while men, steeped in a history of proud industry could feel demoted and demoralised by their positions and their restricted futures, women were finding resilience in a prevailing understanding in the community that employment was not the most important role women can take up. For women, such mundane work could be seen as temporary, and not definitive. They were not carrying a burden of guilt, were not betraying previous generations of women, and were not turning their backs upon traditional roles:

“I went into factory work doing callipers, making callipers for brakes, and I got engaged to a guy up there. It didn’t work out, and then I met my then partner, which he isn’t now, but my partner then for the two children. So I left and I had children. Well, then I spent five years in the house, looking after my daughter Amber. I spend a lot of time at home now. I’ve still got a five year old, and she’ve suffered a great deal, since I left her father. She’s a good kid, but she’ve suffered with, she’s a very insecure little girl. You wouldn’t think it to look at her either but she needs her mam around”

(Melissa)

These women recognised social representations of masculinity and femininity but, unlike the men they were able to use social representations of traditional women’s work to maintain a sense of cohesiveness. The practices underpinning notions of domesticity and femininity persist, enabling the women of the middle generation to use them to position themselves within the new social order in ways that have been acknowledged and are acceptable to the community.

This strong perpetuation of traditional femininity drew heavy shutters across the windows of many homes, locking out education and stopping its spread at the

front door. Traditional household tasks transported themselves through the generations, and as each new generation of women looked to their domestic responsibilities, focusing downwards to the dirt that must be cleaned, many were prevented from looking up to the branches upon which grow very different opportunities:

“I didn’t plan anything. I looked after my grandmother who lived with us. It held me back. I had to be there to wash and dress her. Tablets, lunch, evening meal when I came home. I just didn’t think of anything else”

(Deborah)

But some *were* looking up, and they were recognising that qualifications were becoming the medium of exchange in an order that had no more need for the hard, fit body, and it was the softer bodies of women, unburdened by the weight of coal, that were withstanding the changes and were able to climb to different levels through education. While the realm of education remained distanced from the traditional work of local men it had come into direct contact with the world of domesticity. Women were travelling between these two worlds more freely than their mothers and grandmothers could, and it was the domestic world – a former barrier to education – that was now the currency that was recognized by school and college. The relationship with education that these women were forging is through a specific channel, one that remains rooted in the home:

“I am going back now to college next year for a different thing. Art and design. ‘Cause it is, I know it’s a lot of, there’s gotta be writing in it somewhere, but because I can make clothes, I can crochet, I can use a knitting machine, a sewing machine, umm, I can paint, I can do designs. I can do all that. I feel that maybe it won’t be as scary, going back to college.”

(Melissa)

“To this day I don’t forget what it was like. To not have gas, and I don’t forget what it was like to live off benefits or, what it was like to not have, um, money till the next day, and you haven’t got food and things. So, um, I think that’s a very important piece of learning, for my training, and the job that I’m in, and the work that I do.”

(Juliet)

For these women, increased membership of domestic life was translating the language of education, a language that was so incomprehensible to their younger selves. Through adult feminine roles some women found meaning and purpose in education, and the relevance of the connection between home and school was advancing the status of household roles, making them valuable outside the home in ways that jobs involving sewing, cooking and cleaning did not. While men attempting to enter education were leaving the damaged foundations of traditional masculinity, these women were supported in their ascent by the stability of established femininity. The roles offered to women were not threatening femininity, as those offered to men threatened masculinity, and women were using the domestic world as a springboard to traverse the divide to the world of education.

6.3.2.3 Summary

A change in the balance of social representations of traditional masculinity and femininity resulted from the loss of mining, the basis for social life in Abertillery, while female domesticity roles persisted. These men and women have been affected by, and have responded to shifts in the economic and social foundations of the community in very different ways. Men have been forced to follow non-traditional routes that can only lead to lower status practices, and the choice has been to betray their fathers or to betray themselves by striving to be what they cannot be. Social representations of men's roles as physical and high earning tell men that they must find paid work, but these ideas clash with the availability of employment that involves 'work of the body'. This undermines men's satisfaction with either the cleaner, more feminine work of the hands, or that of the mind, historically interpreted as masculine but dismissed as feminine in the industrial communities of South Wales. Social representations of traditional men's work have remained so strong within the locale that these men also fail to find a legitimate place for themselves within education, a world feminised by traditional social representations. Thus success in education would involve breaking a code that is both ingrained in, and definitive of the community, that education is not necessary for 'real' men. Longstanding conventions along with the withdrawal of

the means to follow them have left men of the middle generation with no new anchor with which to weather the changes that have occurred in the Abertillery locale.

In contrast the women of this generation have located the security they need to withstand the changes, by continuing to draw upon social representations of women as nurturers. They draw upon their field of experience to allow them legitimate entry into education, and also a valid reason for seeking to pursue academic qualifications - to serve the community as teacher, nursery nurse or youth worker. They are able to re-anchor in this domain, as this re-use of domestic skills neither resists social representations of traditional women's work nor betrays the established code that has long defined women's roles outside the home.

6.3.3 The younger generation

For many of the younger generation, 'the body' is understood in an entirely different way to the way that the older and middle generations were able to recognise it. It is not inescapably associated with work, employment and the community; instead the body is for sport and leisure. This generation is the generation of 'the mind'; the shared core of the metaphor of 'the body', and instead of local employment based on physical labour, futures located outside of the locale are pursued through use of social representations of education as the way forward to valued careers. However, the mark of 'the body' is so indelible in Abertillery that some young men continue to use traditional notions of masculine physicality to project their futures. Even so, it is difficult for men to use 'the body' in traditional ways within the locale, and even those who appropriate social representations of strength, fitness and power do so through routes that lead them away from the geographical area of the South Wales valleys.

6.3.3.1 Flying high, flying away: out of touch with the land

“I’d go away to university, and then if I can I’d go to a new city, where the jobs are basically. I wouldn’t have a problem coming back to Cardiff to be honest, ‘cause Cardiff has got a lot of job opportunities. It’s just where the jobs are basically. So, not back to Abertillery.”

(Stuart)

Very near the sites of the coalmines, above a labyrinth of abandoned tunnels, is a world so completely distanced from life at the coalface that the old order has no resonance here. With the capping of the local mines, the physical and symbolic boundaries between above and below are reinforced; the passing of time has compacted the soil rendering the boundaries permanent. This is a sanitised world of learning that is rooted in school and library, a world detached from the dirt and sweat of heavy labour. Here a strong, hard body has no purpose - there is no product beyond the members themselves, although like coal, this product is also aimed at the outside world. The mines do not speak to the young people populating this new symbolic order. The ears of this generation do not have the capacity to hear their messages, and their minds would not have the ability to translate a language so foreign. Instead the eyes of the young follow the spread of the branches toward a future in which qualifications are now the familiar and accepted currency. This world reaches outward, spreading across the landscape and on beyond its boundaries, its branches forming a bridge to a world that invites many younger men and women to cross, but that is alien and uninviting for many members of older generations, who remain attached to the landscape within the borders of the community.

These young people are not rooted in the landscape as the older generation were, labouring to dig and shape the ground from below and residing in a surface world that was strongly demarcated by the relationship between man and the land. In this newer world the landscape is a merely a plane upon which the young walk unburdened by the weight of the past. Their roots are loosely set in shallow soil, prevented from embedding more deeply in the bedrock below by the blocking of the mineshafts long before they were born. These roots are starved of the sustenance provided to past generations by the meanings of physical men’s work,

and the poorer nourishment from the land now threatens to stunt their growth.

While the eyes of the older generation of men continue to look downward through the land to the tunnels beneath, those of the young men seek the more fertile ground across the landscape:

“The scenery’s not that bad. It’s actually quite refreshing to be honest. Go up the mountains, have a camp, have a hike, do whatever you want, isn’t it? It’s quite nice, but it wouldn’t be an area I’d, spend my life with, even though I’ve been here all my life, so far. I can move. I wouldn’t want to live here all my life, no.”

(Stuart)

The advancing world of education whispers its promises to selected young men and reveals glimpses of life outside the community. It does not need to shout; the voices of miners below ground are muted and unheeded by these disciples of the school. The world within the school building is no longer a void, no longer irrelevant. No longer an empty divide set between childhood and adulthood, it has become an abundant source of nourishment for those preparing for a long journey.

However, the legacies of the old order are continuing to filter through to the new one, and there are young men for whom both the old and new worlds resonate. These men are not trapped by an old order in a changing world as their fathers and uncles have been, and they are not resentful of the demands of traditional masculinity alongside the absence of opportunities to *be* such men. While the meanings layered within the coatings of sweat and dirt on miners’ bodies pulled at the middle generation, these meanings remain invisible and inaudible to young people looking away from the landscape, listening to voices calling from outside the community. However, these meanings are seeping into the bodies of younger men and, like miners did before them, they are finding membership of a world that rewards physical effort, teamwork and the resistance of danger:

“Being an infantry soldier obviously you’re combat troops...I’ve been to Iraq and obviously Ireland, and all over the world basically. Fighting.”

(Liam)

“I did think about the army, but my mother says I’d be wasting all my years as an RAF cadet. So I’m waiting to hear from them. If I don’t go, what would I do? There’s nothing here, no jobs, no.....nothing.”

(Neil)

And these embodied meanings are carried across the once impermeable boundary between work and school, easing entry into the new world of education:

“I couldn’t work here [Abertillery]. I couldn’t. I wanna do all the, as many qualifications as I can. Hopefully that’ll lead me, if I can get a good instructor’s job. People say it’s not very good money, but if you look at the proper personal fitness instructor, there’s a lot of money, you know. There’s good money, and like down the Celtic Manor. I’ve been looking at that, and for the personal instructors up there, they’re on a lot of money, and the big gyms down in Cardiff and everything. If I can get in a big gym, and earn half decent money then I’ll do that.”

(Liam)

“I can learn a lot if go into the RAF. I can get qualifications in construction.”

(Neil)

In this world there is no productive purpose in fashioning the body as a tool for the extraction of coal, and the body itself has become the product. The fit, strong and healthy body forms a currency that does not threaten young men as it did the middle generation, and they are finding purpose and value in the able body:

“I wish I’d worked harder in school, not just football and other sports, but I am fit and that’s helped with my application [*RAF enlistment*].”

(Neil)

“I was just good at sport. I love doing sports, that’s all I wanted to do [.....] It’s not that I hated science, it’s just that I preferred other things to science. I am actually interested in stuff like this because it’s sports related. I know that I can use it in my job.”

(Liam)

“I was part of tae kwon do for a bit.”

(Stuart)

6.3.3.2 *Flying high but returning home: staying in touch with tradition*

“I would love to go to a foreign country. I’d love to go out, to university. I’d love it.”

(Lucy)

We again revisit the family home, and once again find life here to be changed. The world within the home continues to rest upon the stability of domesticity, but many of the young women are absent, no longer occupying their time with household tasks and the gaining of life skills to help support the family unit. They do not hear the voices of past generations of women who strove to keep their families fed, clothed and safe, and were content with these achievements. Instead their ears are attuned to the sounds of opportunity emanating from the school and they cross the boundary into the world of education without a backward glance:

“America for uni, would be great, or, I don’t know, other places, maybe not for uni. I’d really like to visit Dubai.”

(Lucy)

“If I do sport I’d probably say Cardiff because they’re one of the best for sport apparently, I think it’s UWIC. And Bath I heard is quite good for history and humanities and stuff like that so I’d probably go there.”

(Belinda)

“I need to leave to get qualified. There are no uni’s here [*laughs*].”

(Sarah)

The weakening of the old established community hierarchy has blurred the boundaries between men and women’s roles in the world of education, particularly as the prior generation of women has pushed open the doors of the school. Women entering the school are no longer finding it a meaningless space between childhood and womanhood as their grandmothers did, but neither are they merging the worlds of domesticity and education, as did their mother’s generation. These young women are relinquishing traditional female domestic skills to gain both legitimate membership of the school and recognition in the world outside the borders of the community. They are not passengers on the

reliable train of domesticity that has been travelling through the generations; their journey is along an alternative track that can take them across spatial borders, and they are identifying the need to carry educational qualifications as their passports.

These women are committing to a symbolic order that is providing strongly demarcated routes for community members, as bodily labour did in the past. Through education they are reaching out for access into the world of high status employment, a goal previously only expected of local men. The world of education, now relatively unopposed by traditional men's work is offering entry into an alternative world of high status work for both men and women willing to leave the traditions of the community behind, and these young women are seeking such access to a world unfamiliar to older community members whose roots remain strongly embedded in physical labour or domesticity.

However, though the old defining orders are being dismissed by education, the women's world of domesticity cannot be silent, it must continue, and although unheeded, the echoes of the past continue to resonate. Many of these younger women are finding they are unable to cast off the layers of femininity placed upon them by generations of community member. Even as they abdicate traditional household responsibilities to travel towards an alternative world founded by education, the deep roots women planted generations ago continue to nourish subsequent generations of women, and this younger generation expects to return to the community. These women are responding to the requirements of an order that refuses to be silent, and that declines to surrender its members:

"I want to get out of Abertillery. Not 'cause it's a horrible place, 'cause I think it is really beautiful, the mountains are beautiful. But I really wanna see different things and, I really like to, I dunno, I just think I won't be able to stay in the same place for a long time. I wanna go away and do other things and yeah, you can always come back."

(Lucy)

"I wouldn't mind coming back but I wouldn't wanna stay here for a long time. I wanna go travelling before I start teaching, because, but it would definitely be the valley somewhere that I settle. I like the place. I like the people, and I want to, I want to go into politics as well, so if I stay around

here I want to do something more for the area like. So if I stay around here there's more chance of it."

(Belinda)

"I'll definitely come back if I can find a job when I've got my teaching qualifications. I want to work in a primary school around here. I want to stay close to my family."

(Sarah)

6.3.3.3 *Summary*

The aftermath of the rupture in Abertillery has impacted on the previous two generations of men in very different ways. Both were directly affected by the unavailability of jobs; one through redundancy and the other through the withdrawal of expected employment. However, the younger generation have never known the presence of the collieries, have not expected abundant local employment opportunities. Social representations underpin social life, but are necessarily modified by social life, and the loss of traditional practices and roles have resulted in a shift in particularly dominant social representations of the body as primary and the mind as secondary to life for people living in the Abertillery locale. Social representations of Abertillery itself as a prime location on the map of productivity and economics has also been modified, causing earlier generations to struggle, but supporting younger community members in their quest to find futures outside the locale.

These younger men and women are seeking to navigate a route in a world in which they themselves are expected to become the product of value; educated, multi-skilled, employable and mobile. Schools are evaluated on the calibre of their product and the status of locales can be determined by the standard of their education institutions and the quality of their exports. Thus schools are mining the inner resources of the neo-liberal worker; the student who is anchoring within the domain of the 'knowledge economy' and the 'skills bank' to become the source of possible future economic life.

However, while young men are appropriating social representations of formal education, qualifications and mobility, they are also drawing upon persistent notions of the body as the conduit through which they may find a legitimate position within education. They are also finding ways to leave the locale and to stay away. They find it difficult to both engage with education and remain in touch with the community; returning to live in Abertillery would involve re-encountering social representations of traditional masculinity that threaten to undermine and devalue their achievements and their sense of themselves.

Women share this world but they are rooted differently. In contrast to the men, younger women are able to draw upon enduring social representations that support traditional female engagement in a sanitised world in order to focus on education as their way forward. Although they distance themselves from the domestic route taken by the preceding generation of women, this generation is not the first to appropriate social representations of education as a separate world from that of the home, with academic learning distinct from domestic skills. However, unlike their grandmothers who were unable to travel between the two worlds, these women are able to use a social representation of education as the expected way forward for all members of society, and they are able to draw upon this to justify their relocation to a different domain. These women can justify leaving the locale in terms of a temporary hiatus before fulfilling a modified, but nonetheless expected feminine role within the community. Each generation of women have contributed much to the stability of their community and these young women acknowledge their responsibilities regarding the regeneration of a once proud locale, however, they see their contribution to be rooted in roles requiring academic qualifications rather than scrubbing brushes, needles and saucepans.

These younger men and women have very different social representations of work and education available to them than did preceding generations, and they are drawing upon these in their attempt to engage fully with education as a way forward. Education promises much, and young people currently living in locales rooted in traditional masculinity and femininity are appropriating social representations of formal learning in order to project futures for themselves within non-traditional fields. However, the educational and career success of this age

group cannot yet be determined. While they anticipate the routes to their imagined futures to be clear, it cannot be predicted whether the roads they travel will remain unobstructed by social representations persisting from the past.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Research aims

- To investigate the ways in which South Wales' valley communities provide the symbolic material with which people are able to make sense of, and engage with education.
- To investigate generational differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work experience in South Wales valley communities.
- To investigate gender differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct accounts of education and work in South Wales valley communities.

7.2 Introduction

Local culture limits and facilitates the way people make sense and in particular how they think about their relationship with education. Culture in this study was investigated using Moscovici's (1984) theory of Social Representations. The social representations circulating in two South Wales valley communities were mapped using specially designed research instruments involving photographic images of buildings, monuments and landscape within each locale. Differences in social representations were found in the two locales of Abertillery and Ynysawdre. Accounts of education and work were elicited from three generations of community members in each locale, although the study reports findings primarily from Abertillery. The social representations anchored in the mining industry created powerful ideas about masculinity and femininity that were reflected in people's accounts of education and work. Men and women of different generations within a single locale drew on the specific social representations circulating in the locale in different ways, demonstrating shifts in what was salient to them as they spoke about education and work. For the older generation both men and women spoke about a binary opposition between work of the body and work of the mind. Differences were found across the generations,

demonstrating that gradually people have come to imagine education as an important resource required for their working career. Different aspects of social representations circulating in the locales were shown to be salient to men and women of each generation. Social representations can be viewed as common sense theories in which ideas align and repel in non-arbitrary ways. Chapter 6 was dedicated to describing the associative links between ideas that make up social representation viewed as metaphors. The following sections present a more detailed discussion of the findings with regard to relevant theory.

7.3 Research question 1: Investigating the relationship between locale and education

Social representations belong to communities. They circulate within a locale, and they are particular to that locale and its specific history. The dominant themes that emerged in the accounts of people in the Abertillery community were:

Beauty of the Landscape

Industrial use of the landscape

Mining

Identity of the locale

Above ground/Below ground

The Body, The Hands and The Mind

Unity and Fragmentation

Decline and Deterioration

Loss

Schooling

‘Real world’ teaching and learning

College

Responsibility for learning

Sources of support

Work-related education and/or training

The future

These themes are anchored deep in the historical roots of Abertillery, a town that relied on heavy industry, particularly mining, to provide work for local men, and in which education had little relevance to the lives of the community in the past. Its high coal productivity and the relatively high wages paid by the collieries helped build a town that provided much that the community needed. The community formed was relatively distinct and interdependent, due to its location within a narrow valley and its limited transport links with larger towns and cities. Colliery closures in Abertillery during the 1980s can be viewed as a rupture in the life of the community that had traumatic effects on people. The psychic work required to cope, make sense and re-imagine the future was revealed in the participants' accounts. In particular, the roles available to men and women post closure had to be imaginatively recreated. The study was interested in how the locales offer resources from which people imagine themselves and the future.

In Abertillery colliery closure was perceived to bring about a dramatic decline in community cohesion. Members spoke about fragmentation of the community following de-industrialization, a fragmentation specifically connected to the loss of practices related to the coalmining industry. The study demonstrated the strong physical and psychological connection the older generation of men had with mining. Masculine social identities aligned closely with the industry. Some of the older generation of men described themselves as the machines at the heart of the mining process, which were now broken and discarded. The fit, strong body had held high status due to its association with mining. As the local coal industry became un-required, so the body lost its purpose. It no longer produced coal, and could no longer maintain the existing social order based around physical labour. The middle generation spoke about the mining industry with more ambiguity than the older generation. Their accounts revealed a tension between manual labour and mental labour. Some of the men had attempted to take up an alternative trajectory by engaging with higher education, yet none of those interviewed in this study had managed to complete their degree course.

Ynysawdre by contrast had not relied fully upon coal mining, and had benefited from an extremely good road and rail network connecting it to Cardiff and beyond. The surrounding area had attracted a range of large employers and

shopping facilities had improved in recent years. Though both locales had experienced the rupture of coal industry closure, each community had formed different social representations. Each community had coped with rupture in different ways. In Ynysawdre some men and women had continued to appropriate social representations of the past and remained closely aligned with traditional social roles based in past practices. Some men had engaged with alternative masculine employment that privileged skilled hands. For example, Thomas had taken up employment in engineering works and garages, and had been willing to move from job to job as the need arose. However, the physical landscape with its easy access to large range of employers afforded the means with which others were able to imagine futures in careers requiring academic qualifications, and these were able to fully engage with education.

Within each community groups had appropriated the social representations of their locale differently. Findings suggest that the social representations available in local communities had constrained and facilitated people's imagined futures differently. In the older generation, it was clear that the values attached to mining constrained people's ability to engage with education. Social representations of masculinity were strongly anchored in the practices of mining. The industry required men to produce hard, physically efficient bodies to extract coal from the ground. Work of the body was imagined to be opposed to work of the mind, which came to align with an opposition between masculinity and femininity. The older generation recognised a social representation in which a series of binaries were produced, between hard and soft, body and mind, work and education. As was shown in chapter 4, page 85, themes relating to industrial land use, mining, above and below ground and the working body emerged in accounts from the older generation of men. These men still drew on social representations anchored in the practice of mining to make sense of their world and imagine their futures. They endowed these themes with positive meaning, expressing the importance of camaraderie, unity and community forged by men working in spaces below ground. Education was of little or no benefit in a community that had no need for it due to its valuing of the male body and its labour in the mines.

Theoretical arguments relating to a mind/body opposition have been discussed from Descartes to Walkerdine (e.g. 1984), and the accounts in this study demonstrate that this distinction is grounded in the practices associated with manual labour. The coalmines and the school came to represent the opposition of the body and the mind, and anticipated entry into the mines negated the purpose of the school. The physical miner's body was a status symbol of a productive and valued industry, and to prioritise the mind would undermine these values and jeopardise the social order.

Though the older women were distanced from the social representations of bodily practices, they still recognised the social representations associated with mining. As with the men, these women did not have social representations of education that could support their participation. Instead they spoke of their exclusion from the practices of schooling through a commonly-held expectation that they would take up familial duties at an early age. The 'softer' roles of women complimented the heavy labour of hard bodied men in the locale, and were also anchored in those social representations related to traditional masculinity and mining. For example, when Richard's mother washed the coal dust off his father, both were recreating and sustaining powerful social representations of masculinity and femininity through their daily roles and practices. In carrying out these practices men and women were reinforcing the divide between the hard and the soft - the body and the mind.

When the coal industry began to collapse the daily practices and social roles that had sustained the community were dramatically changed. Some disappeared permanently, while others needed to be modified to adjust to the new social order resulting from the rupture. The strong binaries started to lose their oppositional identities and slide into one another. The men of the middle generation had to rethink the previous strong division between work of the mind and body as a gender binary – some of them imagined becoming educated, even if they did not succeed in practice. Alex, Jeremy and Sam, all embarked on higher education courses, yet they all failed to complete their university education. The different reasons Alex, Sam and Jeremy offered for their failure to complete higher education could all be followed back to the power of the dominant social

representations of the locale to constrain ways of thinking. Each man expressed regret that they were unable to complete their education. The younger people in the study did not speak about mining. Instead they imagined futures outside the locale and they recognised the need for a strong investment in education as the resources that would facilitate these.

By contrast the women of the middle generation continued to take up and use deeply rooted social representations based on practices related to domesticity. Practices relating to caring and the home that continued to have value regardless of the industrial changes impacting on the locale. These social representations enabled women to cope with the rupture of de-industrialisation and emerge in a position from which they were able to move forward. Relatively unfettered by shifts in social representations anchored in the male body, the women have been able to begin to engage with education in a way that many men of the middle generation have not been able to.

It is in the accounts of the younger generation that the psychological effects of the physical changes in the locale are most notable. The narratives of both men and women demonstrate that, in the absence of the traditional means to invest in 'the body' social representations of education have been taken up and used by younger people to imagine a way forward. In chapter 4, page 87, it was shown that this group focused notably more on the efforts and endeavours of the individual, rather than the community. Education was seen as the route forward and they accepted responsibility for their own learning.

The accounts have demonstrated how people's relationships with education are deeply rooted in the practices available at different times. Yet the material culture available in their locales carries vestiges of past practices and makes them available to future generations. In Abertillery, pithead wheels are positioned as monuments to a period of productivity and power based on the practices of local men. One has even been placed beside the main building of the comprehensive school. Mosaics present images of mining that are argued by some participants to be overly positive, and the local museum itself is largely dedicated to mining.

7.4 Research questions 2 and 3: Investigating *generational* and *gender* differences in the use of symbolic resources to construct an account of education and work experience

The thematic analysis of chapter 4 constituted a necessary but artificial distinction between individual themes in an attempt to map key ideas circulating in the locales. The use of metaphor in chapter 6 reassembled these themes by exploring the core ideas and practices at the root of dominant social representations. It explored how these cohere by attracting or repelling other social representations (Jodelet, 1991), so that the use of a dominant social representation as a symbolic resource controls access to, and use of others. The study found that in Abertillery, networks of social representations were collected around binary oppositions, particularly mind/body, above/below and dirt/cleanliness, and that these networks changed as the physical locale was transformed. Through symbolic resources locales and their inhabitants come alive, allowing the changes that social representations undergo over time to be followed through generations.

Chapter 6 identified key oppositions in the structures of social representations circulating in Abertillery, specifically mind/body, above ground/below ground and dirt/cleanliness. Underlying these were the practices of the locales, which placed education in the sphere of 'the mind'. For the older generation the dirty miner's body working underground was a symbol of productivity, prosperity and power. Men and women both recognised these social representations, but used them in different ways in order to sustain the traditional way of life.

By contrast social representations of mining were opposite to education. Ideas and practices relating to the cerebral world of education were incompatible with those of masculine bodily labour in the accounts of the older generation. To embrace one involved the rejection of the other. Education was either not available or was seen to be unavailable. Those few who found a way to enter education did so by taking up elements of the social representation of *mining*, particularly aspects relating to danger and safety. They focused on the dirt, health risks and danger of mining to justify an alternative, less popular trajectory.

The analysis in chapter 6 demonstrated how the content of social representations shifted for those born into the locale at later times. It identified how, without the collieries and the practices associated with mining - 'the reification of human ideas in solid form' (D'Andrade, 1986, in Bornstein and Lamb, 2005, p.22) – elements of a strong network of social representations began to weaken. For the middle generation of men the binary opposition of mind/body was salient, as historical legacies relating to the valuing of traditional masculinity persisted, but the content had altered. The absence of bodily labour in the mines had caused social representations of masculine work to lose some of its power to repel 'education'. This shift opened up new possibilities, and some men of this generation were able to imagine themselves becoming educated. However, historically dominant social representations continued to exert their influence and prevented those in the study from succeeding.

The analysis has shown that change in the structure of social representations over time has retained particular elements of the binary oppositions. These have allowed middle generation women to cope more successfully with change in the locale. The social representations that positioned women in terms of domesticity, the surface world and cleanliness have enabled them to make the transition from industrial to post-industrial social order in a way that the older generation of men did not. Chapter 6 demonstrated that middle generation women were able to re-anchor in the domain of education. However, the value of social representations anchored in domesticity can still constrain how women imagine themselves forward. Local women of the middle generation entered education related to the vocational.

The study found that social representations of the body continue to be salient in Abertillery, even for those of the younger generation. However, the relationship between body and mind has shifted for this group. New social representations relating to neo-liberalism have fused with those of both 'the body' and 'education' to form a very different structure of social representations. Young men spoke about the male worker as educated, multi-skilled, employable and mobile. Young men can imagine futures within a global community. However, some young people who were unable to imagine themselves forward through education used

historically available social representations to imagine alternative social identities. Liam and Neil, from Abertillery, both opted out of education and both chose to enlist in the military. They appropriated social representations that reflected the value of the physical body rooted in past industrial practices.

Young women were found to be able to draw upon enduring social representations that support traditional female engagement in a sanitised world in order to focus on education as a way forward. For these women, these social representations were compatible with those of 'the knowledge economy' formed outside the locale that place responsibility for education with the individual. The women used these to imagine futures within education.

7.5 Theoretical discussion

This study has demonstrated the connection of 'relations of a cognitive order with those of a social order' (Mugny, De Paolis and Carugati, 1984, p.137). It has demonstrated that social trauma and social change are also psychological trauma and change. Links were identified between the social origins of ideas and the physical locale. Social representations are 'negotiated constructs of social groups' (Wagner et al., 1999, p.2) and are negotiated according to the historical practices that define a locale. Holland and Lave (2001) have illustrated how persons are constructed through relationships with education and other activities, and the study has illustrated how practices facilitated by the Abertillery locale have created sign systems that have socially marked objects, spaces, institutions and people, and that this had mediated how people were able to make sense.

The study has shown how long-present practices, concepts and meanings have shaped the sense-making of individuals. The social representations identified contain recognizable cores that are enduring and resistant to modification. At the core of some of the dominant social representations in these locales are antinomies; oppositions that can be argued to have demarked life for certain individuals, particularly those of the older generation. It has been possible to identify how oppositional thinking has come to underlie common sense thinking

(e.g. Moscovici, 1992, in Markova, 2003) in the two locales. Specifically, the relations between the oppositional notions of mind/body, above and below ground, and dirt and cleanliness appear to have been negotiated according to the historical mining practices that dominated the Abertillery locale, and to have served to underpin sense-making in that community. There was an identifiable pattern regarding appropriation of the core of the social representation of mining, as there was with the core elements of social representations of miners and mining communities. In the case of the older generation in Abertillery, while social representations of mining and miners are no longer supported by the practices of mining, the oppositions created and supported by industrial practices continue to be appropriated in the construction of accounts of experiences of education and work.

Analysis of the accounts demonstrated that themata, or taxonomies of oppositional nature (Jovchelovitch, 2007) were actively appropriated when people constructed accounts of times of rupture or threat. The accounts showed clear evidence that men and women appropriated these for multiple, but different purposes during their interviews. When providing their accounts both men and women recognized oppositions such as masculine/feminine, dirt/cleanliness and above and below ground, but appropriated them to construct contrasting worlds and identities founded on practices. For both genders, the appropriation of themata allowed for the maintenance of a sense of in-group membership (e.g. Duveen and Lloyd, 1990), while also serving to resist threats to their sense of community from social representations of mining communities as 'declining' and 'deteriorating'. The study has also demonstrated that core elements of social representations consisting of oppositions had become central elements of identity for men and women, identities thus rooted in the practices of the locale. For the men, these themata served to preserve identities based upon pride, mastery, purpose and status, while for the women it served to support identities based upon the significance of the domestic realm. For both men and women, these themata forming the core of relevant social representations underpinned and validated their education choices and trajectories.

Although the study has maintained a focus upon the individual rather than the collective, it has emphasised the powerful effects of specific group membership. Ex-miners attending the 'stress group' have been able to collaboratively manage a shared identity – men who 'did' and who 'know' – which has helped to protect individual social identities that have been threatened by de-industrialization. However, the study showed that it was not only the older generation that appropriated core elements of social representations anchored in the industrialized community that once inhabited their locale. The interviews demonstrated that core representations are indeed extremely resilient. The accounts of each generation showed that core elements of social representations were appropriated, and that these supported the image of a conventional mining community. This supports Dick's (e.g. 2003) assertion that mythical communities are likely to be imaginary constructs rather than empirical realities. The study also identified the circulation of 'common' or shared ideas that are influenced by social representations held by others outside the community (Moscovici, 1984), and which were accepted or resisted by residents of the locales in the negotiation of community and social identities.

This suggests that social representations of 'mining communities' may have become mythologized due to the appropriation of polemic social representations due to social and political conflict (Flick, 1998, p.50). It could be argued that local people who supported the miners during de-industrialization have appropriated meanings constructed through mining practices, and that these interpretations of mining communities have acquired reality (see Howarth, 2001). The choices of the three generations regarding images they would use to represent their locale to outsiders provide evidence for this, with each generation selecting traditional mining images. This demonstrates how particularly powerful ways of understanding can come to be shared, either by entire communities, or by sub-groups within larger communities, (e.g. Jodelet, 1991; Jovchelovitch, 2002; Moscovici; 2000). However, although at times each generation shared a social representation, these served them differently. In the accounts of many of the older generation social representations of Abertillery as an 'old fashioned mining community' provided the bedrock of social identity, and their resistance towards the re-evaluation of the in-group (e.g. miners or miner's families) demonstrated

the presence of coexisting social representations of miners (cognitive polyphasia). These participants were challenging the social representations of mining communities held by 'outsiders' (e.g. Howarth, 2002).

Alternatively, such a social representation of the Abertillery locale was contested and resisted by many of the middle generation in the construction of their narratives. This resistance allowed for the presentation of a very different type of identity; one based upon a denial of the supremacy of heavy industry the 'miner's body'. For the younger of the three generations, core elements of social representations of mining and miners were appropriated as history. This distancing promoted the imagining of very different futures and the construction of identities far removed from those situated within the physical environment of the locale.

Although the accounts suggest that the core elements continued to circulate within the locale, the more flexible periphery elements (Abric, 1993) organised around the core of social representations appeared to have been transformed over time (e.g. Markova, 2003). This illustrates the dynamic relationship between people, social representations and identities, as individuals draw upon different periphery elements in specific ways, adapting the social representation as they maintain or modify elements of their social identity. For example, Richard's appropriation of specific core and periphery elements of a social representation of mining to explain that younger people 'didn't know' about the red water running from the lake. This was one way in which he was able to resist negative constructions of his 'in-group', miners, as no longer useful, and thus protect his own sense of positive identity. Philip also did this as he presented the value of skilled hands in his locale, contesting the relevance of formal education, and resisting the devaluing of practical competency. The interviews highlight the lived reality of material connections to place and the tangible nature of many identities.

This contestation and resistance also demonstrates Howarth's (2002) connection of social representations with social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), and particularly with Turner's (1987) social categorisation theory. The interviewees recognized the relatively negative social representations held by others about their

social group, and thus themselves, and by responding in some way to these were able to modify or preserve elements of their own identity. However, the study has also shown how people are able to re-evaluate representations of their locale and of themselves, and to what extent people are able to accept change. Richard, for example, did not resist all the modified social representations resulting from de-industrialization. He affirmed that miners had become 'surplus to requirements', but he continued to elaborate upon elements of social representations rooted in the past, using them as symbolic resources to maintain a sense of identity in the face of massive change.

The study has also demonstrated how social representations have been used by the participants of the study without their conscious realisation (e.g. Oyserman and Markus, 1998). Patterns of ideas following a logic specific to the community have blocked the imaginative possibilities of individuals without their conscious awareness. The study has shown the level of psychological work that is necessary for people to escape the constraints of the past. The narratives of the men and women have been held together by their appropriation and use of specific social representations available to them in their locale. These narratives have allowed a deeper level of analysis of the ways in which individuals use social representations to achieve personal aims. For example, Richard's account suggested that he does not volunteer at the museum merely to help out, but because he needs to maintain a connection with social representations of mining and the 'strong miner's body'. Melissa talked of her need for education and training but she consistently reached into the past to take up and use social representations of women as nurturing homemakers to make sense of the future she imagined for herself within Abertillery.

The interviews suggest that the dissolution of boundaries caused by globalisation may not have the pervasive effect on communities that has been suggested (e.g. Massey, 1995). Technological advances have offered new freedoms to people in many communities, and interdependent economies emphasise global relationships. However, the accounts suggest that the ability of distinct communities to change may be relatively slow. Historical legacies still resonate and continue to be activated by community members - the social construct of 'place' (Gieryn, 2000)

continues to be held together by the relationship between location, material form and meaningfulness. The study has demonstrated that people construct inner landscapes/worlds from the social representations afforded by their locales and that these legacies of the past constrain how people can make sense in times of change. Following the trauma of de-industrialisation the Abertillery community has needed to look outside its boundaries. However, the older generation in Abertillery has continued to reach back into the past to psychologically re-establish boundaries in order to cope with transition.

The study has contributed a new temporal dimension to Massey's theorising of 'place' by identifying how men and women of different generations used social representations in different ways that reflect changes in their locale over time. People of different generations construct identities that are intimately connected with 'places', not 'spaces'; these identities, and ways of making sense, are rooted in practices and meanings that are linked to specific time periods within locales (see Casey, 2001). This resonates with Crang's (1998) notions of the 'time-thickening' of places, with each generation layering their own contemporary values over landscapes already saturated with meanings endowed by earlier generations.

The analytic tools employed in this study have addressed the geographic dimension of social life (see Dixon and Durrheim, 2000); they have shown how geographical landscapes define and protect identities. Social representations circulating within a locale are attached to artefacts, architecture and the landscape. These are spoken about by individuals in particular ways, and come to form a shared reservoir of resources if they are recognized and recovered by specific groups. In addition, the accounts demonstrate that a particular social representation can be recognized by many, but may be appropriated in different ways by individuals depending on their identity needs (see Duveen, 2001). It could be argued that locales that possess, or have possessed extremely salient physical features, along with identifiable industrial pasts, develop and preserve social representations of the past that contain strong core elements, in ways that more diffuse and diverse locales do not. Through a focus upon the ways in which local practices set parameters for sense-making, the study has also emphasised the

materiality of representation: the lived reality of material worlds, how embodied identities are rooted through locality-specific activity into the ground upon which the community stands.

The study has demonstrated how change impacts upon understandings of education and work; changes including the increasingly globalized, symbolic communities growing out of technological advancements. However, it returns the emphasis to the ways in which the *locale* provides the resources with which people are able to make sense of both their own, and other communities. The affordances of the Abertillery locale over time have enabled inhabitants to make sense of education in very specific ways. These affordances have also supported the dominant taxonomies (masculinity/femininity, dirt/cleanliness and above and below) that emerged in the accounts. While changes in practices have been shown to give way to different forms of masculinity (e.g. Brandth and Haugen, 2005), deeply rooted social representations circulating in Abertillery have continued to oppose alternative identities.

The narratives elicited for this study have illustrated how social representations lie at the heart of the relationship between social change and personal change. Generational differences in identity management are evident in chapter 4; the different ways in which social representations are recognized and appropriated by people entering the locale at different temporal points were clearly identified. The study has demonstrated that social representations circulating within a locale underpin the ways in which individuals are able to deal with transition and negotiate education and work trajectories. Specifically, it has demonstrated that individuals appropriate social representations in extremely personal ways, as symbolic resources, but that this appropriation is nonetheless constrained by socially shared systems of understanding.

The concept of symbolic resources (Zittoun et al., 2003) enabled an investigation of how different individuals actively appropriate social representations in specific ways to imagine themselves and their futures in changing locales. Specifically, it allowed an exploration of how some people imagine futures in education while others do not. The majority of the older generation of men took up and used

aspects of social representations of masculinity that excluded social representations of education. This personal take up of social representations (e.g. Zittoun et al., 2003) allowed them to forge an identity based on 'the body'. Engagement with formal education threatened the identity of local men unless it was related to their physical work, for example, miner's training. The study has demonstrated that use of symbolic resources by later generations has resulted in different personal relationships with formal education. For example, many of the accounts of men and women of the middle group suggest ambivalent relationships with education. While formal schooling was recognized as valued by employers, social representations of education as 'other', and of the roles of working class men and women resulted in either resistance to education or failure to progress. In contrast, young men and women have begun to engage with a neo-liberal discourse that promotes both formal qualifications and personal responsibility for learning.

The appropriation of social representations of education as accessible and useful by many of the younger participants emphasises the way in which 'different kinds of knowledge, possessing different rationalities, live side by side in the same individual' (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p.60). This cohort, like the older two generations, had acknowledged social representations of mining as the traditional history of the Abertillery locale when they selected traditional images to represent the locale to outsiders. However, they drew upon social representations of education in order to construct their personal accounts and imagine their futures. Throughout the interviews with all three generations, cognitive polyphasia (Moscovici, 1961.1976a, in Jovchelovitch, 2007) was evident, as participants drew upon specific forms of knowledge according to their needs within a particular social context (Jovchelovitch, 2007).

The in-depth analysis of the accounts of Philip and Richard further emphasizes how individuals use particular aspects of social representations rather than others as symbolic resources to account for their negotiation of transitional periods in their lives. Richard's interview provides a powerful example of how an ex-miner may draw heavily upon the body to construct a social identity based on physical masculinity, and also to account for his life transitions. Richard's description of

the stress group, along with fieldwork visits to the group, provides evidence that a specific social representation may not only circulate particularly strongly within a group of people. Members of that group may also appropriate it as a symbolic resource in order to talk about, re-live and preserve aspects of their shared pasts. In this way social representations are collaboratively affirmed.

Many instances of apparently contradictory appropriation appeared in Philip's narrative as he connected the past to the present and imagined his future with regard to employment. An individual's appropriation of particular social representations as symbolic resources depends on their psychological needs, and Philip's account illustrated how, at different points of the interview, he appropriated social representations of education as either exclusive and alienating (his own schooling), or responsive to children's needs (e.g. his son's education). In the cases of both Richard and Philip, oppositions that may have previously been taken for granted appeared to become important due to the presence of some level of threat.

The study has shown the relationship between practices available in a locale, the ideas that circulate, and the ways in which different groups can form social identities and imagine futures. This enables us to see Gorard and Rees's (2002) five interrelated determinants - time, place, gender, family and initial schooling - as cultural streams. In order to understand why people engage or disengage with education we have to understand how these elements are features of *culture*, and also that they are merging in particular ways to allow people to use specific social representations. Within cultures ideas attract, repel and align with others, and these structures of social representations are patterned according to the history and practices of the locales. This study has advanced theoretical understanding relating to people's engagement and disengagement in education. The use of social representations theory and the concept of symbolic resources have provided a way to understand *how* people use their culture to form social identities and to imagine futures within education and work.

This research has demonstrated that powerful relationships exist between representation and identity. Analysis of the accounts has provided evidence that

social representations underpin the identity of communities, the identities of community groups and the identities individuals are constantly negotiating in the face of evolving locales. It has further demonstrated that people draw upon social representations in individual ways according to their own personal history in order to construct a sense of coherence whilst maintaining a positive sense of self. This was particularly evident in the narratives of the participants.

The theoretical standpoint of this study suggests that hegemonic social representations circulate within communities, and that distinct groups within a community, such as those based on practice, age or gender, may appropriate these differently. Specifically, social representations are operationalized as symbolic resources. Both the interviews and the fieldwork have pointed to the importance of social support in the preservation or modification of specific forms or elements of social representations. For example, ex-miners perpetuated social representations anchored in the past through their shared recognition, elaboration and acceptance of these. Older housewives presented a strong sense of community through their mutual acknowledgment of social representations of female roles. Young A level students demonstrated a collective understanding of social roles, along with education and employment opportunities both within and outside the locale. This suggests the power of social spaces that support dialogue and debate; spaces such as Richard's 'stress group', and also the school sixth form. Subsequent research could further explore the ways in which groups of people, pulled particularly closely together through practice may come to use symbolic resources in extremely similar ways. Such further study could extend the exploration of how membership of tightly-knit groups may constrain individual use of symbolic resources: how practice-based collectives guide sense-making. This could further consider how people negotiate identities through their voluntary or involuntary membership of specific social groups within their community.

7.6 Reflections

The design of this study was intended to allow a comparison of two different locales in order to investigate how the physical locale sets parameters within which community members imagine themselves and their futures. The research in Abertillery and Ynysawdre has achieved that. Additionally, the decision to place the emphasis on a single locale, Abertillery, has provided particularly rich data relating to the use of social representations by communities over time. Photo-elicitation interviews afforded a way to re-present elements of the material culture of the locale to community members. These were effective in relating the locale to experiences of education and work. However, as some participants identified elements of the locale that they felt were missing from the photograph collection, a future consideration would be to provide disposable cameras for the participants to photograph images in the locale that carry meaning for them. These could be used in conjunction with researcher-taken images, which would also allow a deeper discussion of insider/outsider recognition of the locale.

The use of different planes of analysis has furthered this investigation by allowing a shift of theoretical focus to recognise how individuals take up only certain aspects of social representations that have meaning for them, and how they use these in personal ways as symbolic resources. The unstructured interviews allowed each individual to construct a narrative using elements they had endowed with personal meaning. This allowed the exploration of *how* they used specific social representations circulating in their locale to imagine themselves and their futures.

However, sampling and data collection proved to be problematic in one of the locales. While snowball sampling was effective in Abertillery, in Ynysawdre this proved difficult. A future consideration would therefore be to secure more gatekeepers in each locale and also arrange recruitment meetings with different social groups, particularly young people who do not participate in non-compulsory education.

As a result of the recruitment difficulties some participant groups contained either only two or three individuals, or a number of similar individuals (e.g. students). This has lessened the extent to which *specific* patterns can be argued to exist across generations and genders, but does not negate the argument that different patterns of appropriation *did* emerge across groups. An aim of the study was to demonstrate that people who were members of particular ‘worlds’ existing in the locale, perhaps due to gender, age or engagement with particular practices, would appropriate social representations in ways particular to that membership. This the research has achieved.

This study has been able to explore how the structure of social representations change and identify how different groups within a locale appropriate social representations. However, the stronger aspects of this research relate to the older and middle generations. The interpretations stemming from the accounts of the younger group are less robust. This is due to the absence of subgroups of the younger generation, particularly young unemployed men and women who are not in education or training. The extreme difficulty involved in recruiting unemployed young people resulted in gaps in the data. This would be a matter for attention in future research of social representations of education and work. Payment for the volunteers could be a consideration in areas of particularly low recruitment.

There remains a need to understand more about how people can imagine better futures in declining locales. Questions include whether the historical legacies of locales will continue to block trajectories and, if this is so, where people can locate alternative symbolic material that will enable them to imagine positive futures involving education. Within Abertillery there were a range of subgroups of young men and women based on academic success, motivation regarding education, employment status, and those who engage with ‘Communities First’ to undertake work experience, training and education and those who do not. A strong focus on different groups of young people within struggling locales would allow an understanding of the ways these groups use social representations as symbolic resources, and how this use facilitates or constrains imagined futures in education.

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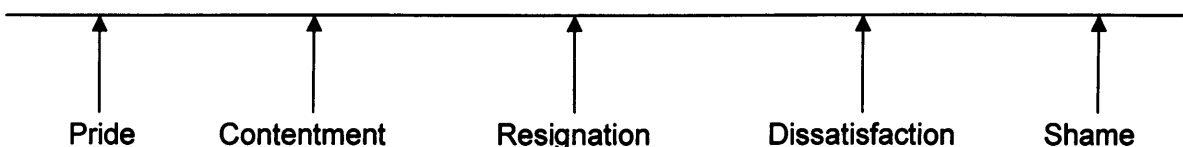
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Interview schedule for photo-elicitation interviews

Section 1 – Locale

1. Would you select the 3 pictures that you feel most represent your area
2. What are the first 5 words that come to mind when you look at these pictures?
3. Would you select the images that you feel most relate to your life?
4. Would you select the images that you least relate to?
5. Which pictures do you think someone from London would choose to represent this area?
6. Why do you think they would choose these?
7. Which images would you choose to represent your area to someone from outside?
8. Why have you chosen these pictures?
9. Are there any images you would have liked to be included but that are not included here?
10. Why would you choose those images?
11. Would you choose the same images if discussing the area with someone locale?
12. Why? / Why not? - Which would you choose?
13. Overall, how does living in this locale make you feel?
(Make a mark anywhere that you feel is appropriate along the line)



Section 2 - Education

Photographs	Abertillery	Ynysawdre
Primary	Queen Street Primary School	Bryncethin Primary School
Secondary	Abertillery Comprehensive School	Ynysawdre Comprehensive School
Tertiary	Ebbw Vale College	Bridgend College
Higher	University of Wales, Newport	Cardiff University

(Explain to the participants that these images represent different types of education)

14. Which of these types of place do you feel has been most important in your life?

15. Why?

16. What is your opinion of schools in this area?

17. How did you feel about going to school here?

18. When you were at school, what was your attitude towards education?

19. Why was this?

20. How do you think education related to what you have done with your life?

Section 3 – Aspirations and significant people

21. At what age did you first have a strong idea of what you would do after leaving school?

22. What did you think you would do?

23. What made you think that this was what you would do?
(Possible prompt: family involvement? ability in particular school subjects? local opportunities? Other reasons?)

24. Was it what you wanted to do at the time?

25. In not, what did you want to do?

26. Were you encouraged or discouraged to pursue your idea?

If encouraged:

27. Who encouraged you?

28. How did they encourage you?

If discouraged:

29. Who discouraged you?

30. How did they discourage you?

31. Looking back, who were the people who most encouraged your education or work pathway?

Section 4 – Background

32. How long have you lived in this area

33. Did your parents and grandparents grow up in this area

34. What work did they do?

Father

P/Grandfather

P/Grandmother

Mother

M/Grandfather

M/Grandmother

35. Have you lived outside this area?

If yes:

Where?

Why?

36. Do you currently have a job?

37. What type of work do you do/have you done?

38. What do you think influenced your pathway regarding further education and work?

(Possible prompt: availability/unavailability of jobs, specific life events, significant people, talents, skills.....)

Section 5 – Future participation in education

39. Do you regret not following a different pathway?

Further questioning if necessary:

- Different or more education?
- Why? / why not?
- Different career pathway?
- Why / Why not?

40. Do you have any plans to participate in education or training in the future?

41. Why? / Why not?

Section 6 – Demographic details

Sex group: Male / Female

Race / Ethnicity:

Age:	16-25 <input type="checkbox"/>	26-29 <input type="checkbox"/>	30-45 <input type="checkbox"/>	46-49 <input type="checkbox"/>
	50-59 <input type="checkbox"/>	60-65 <input type="checkbox"/>	66-69 <input type="checkbox"/>	70-75 <input type="checkbox"/>



Image 1: Ebenezer Chapel



Image 2: Cwmtillery pithead wheel



Image 3: Boarded up engineers shop



Image 4: Mobile Phone shop



Image 5: Ebbw Vale College



Image 6: Queen Street School



Image 7: Tesco



Image 8: Arena night club



Image 9: Church Street shops



Image 10: Abertillery Library



Image 11: Mosaic – Abertillery Railway Station



Image 12: Mosaic – Foundry work



Image 13: Abertillery Youth Centre



Image 14: Graffiti

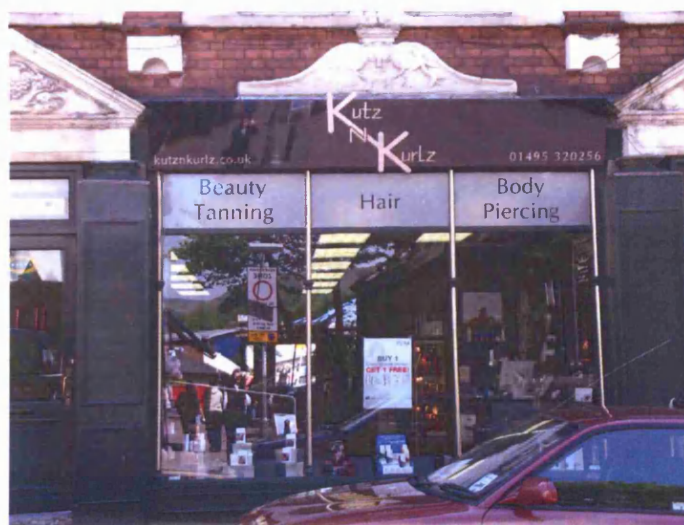


Image 15: Hair Salon



Image 16: Remploy



Image 17: Cwmtillery pithead wheel



Image 18: The Arcade



Image 19: Six Bells Monument



Image 20: St Michaels Church



Image 21: Boarded up Coach and Horses public house



Image 22: Abertillery Comprehensive School



Image 23: The Penndragon public house



Image 24: Blaenau Gwent Sports Centre



Image 25: Cwmtillery Lakes



Image 26: Bus Station



Image 27: Mosaic – Cwmtillery Mine

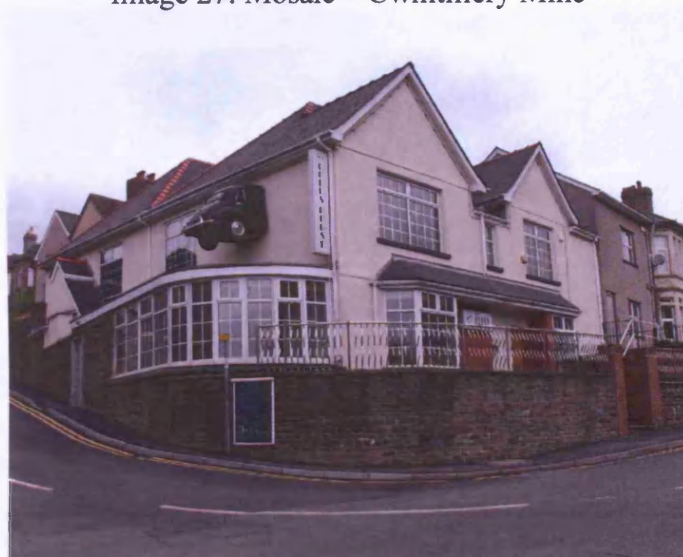


Image 28: Doll's House Public House



Image 29: Mosaic - Brewing



Image 30: Pigeon cotts



Image 31: Abertillery Rugby Ground



Image 32: Vivian Pumping Station (site of former mine)



Image 33: Market Street



Image 34: Tillery Valley Foods



Image 35: The Emporium Car Sales



Image 36: Site of Ebbw Vale Steelworks



Image 37: University of Wales, Newport



Image 1: Bryn Road Chapel



Image 2: Woof & Go Dog Grooming Salon



Image 3: Abergarw Industrial Estate



Image 4: The Tanning Centre



Image 5: Bryncethin Primary School



Image 6: Ynysawdre Comprehensive School



Image 7: Rank of shops - Ynysawdre



Image 8: McArthur Glen Food Court and Odeon Cinema



Image 9: McArthur Glen Shopping Mall



Image 10: Sarn Life Long Learning Centre



Image 11: Tondy Railway Station



Image 12: Tondy Ironworks



Image 13: Bryngarw Country House and Park



Image 14: Graffiti on side of Ynysawdre Swimming Pool



Image 15: Sofas Direct



Image 16: Brynmenyn Industrial Estate



Image 17: Business in Focus Business Park



Image 18: Filco Supermarket



Image 19: Parc Slip Nature Reserve – site of colliery



Image 20: Llansanfraidd Church



Image 21: Vacant on Brynmenyn Industrial Estate



Image 22: Bridgend College



Image 23: Royal Oak Public House



Image 24: Tondur Rugby Club



Image 25: Ynysawdre Community Centre



Image 26: Bus on Heol Canola, Sarn

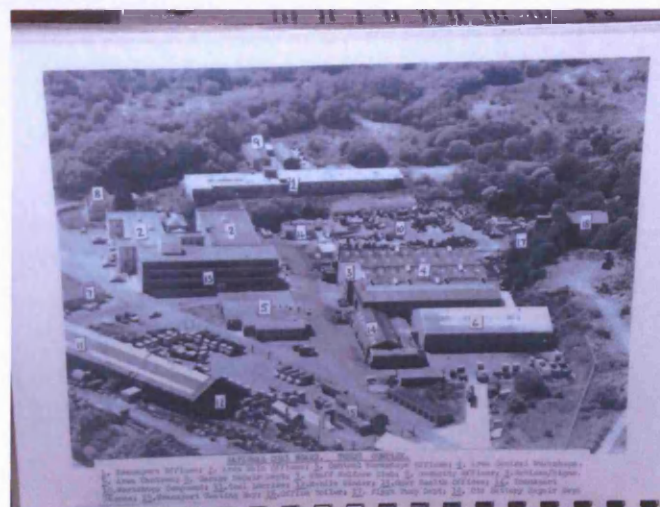


Image 27: NCB Training Centre, Tondur



Image 28: Sarn Social Club



Image 29: Site of Tondu Brickworks



Image 30: Aberkenfig Welfare Bowls Club



Image 31: Pandy Park



Image 32: Site of Ffaldau Colliery



Image 33: Ynysawdre Swimming Pool



Image 34: Bridgend Ford



Image 35: Lloyds TSB Call Centre



Image 36: Site of Ocean Colliery



Image 37: Cardiff University

